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# Music and Letters

OCTOBER, 1925.

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## THE SHARP MEMORIAL FUND

It is proposed to open in the pages of this magazine an anonymous subscription list to the *Sharp Memorial Fund*. The following letter has been received from The Lady Mary Trefusis, who is a member of the Memorial Committee:—

*To the Editor, MUSIC AND LETTERS.*

Dear Mr. Editor,

I think there must be many people who have not subscribed to the Cecil Sharp Memorial Fund, and yet who would like to send their mite to help us to provide a house for the books Mr. Sharp left to the English Folk Dance Society, and a centre for its activities. May I appeal, through you, to any who appreciate English folk dancing and folk songs to give a small sum, however small. A large part of money already subscribed has been given in quite small amounts. Some of the county collections have been raised by the pennies of children and others who love folk dancing, and who wanted to join in the memorial to the man who made it available for them.

Your obedient servant,

MARY TREFUSIS.

*President English Folk Dance Society.*

Cecil Sharp died in the faith that he had given something worth having to his fellow-countrymen. I believe that a large number of them share that faith, and that the words of Dr. Vaughan Williams express very much what they feel. He said:—"When the history of the English musical revival of the twentieth century comes to be written, the most famous name of the period will be, I believe, not that of a composer, performer or theorist, but that of Cecil Sharp, who rediscovered our English folk songs and dances and gave them back to those to whom they belong . . . . It is the music of the home, the music of the amateur which finally makes us

a musical nation; the highly skilled professional musician is the crest of the wave—without the wave the crest cannot exist."

The great wish of Sharp's latter years was for a hall in which to sing these songs and dance these dances, with an office and rooms for separate tuition, complete in itself, in some fairly central position in London. The English Folk-dance Society want to carry out that wish, with the addition of a library to house the books which he has left them by his will. They have already subscribed among themselves a number of pounds sterling not far short of their total membership, so that at any rate they are in earnest about it. As to the wisdom of the scheme, the Prime Minister wrote to Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, who presided over the meeting which was held at the Mansion House in May:—"The proposal to establish a national centre in London for the study and practice of folksongs and folkdances has my entire sympathy. . . . (These songs and dances) reflect, in their own way, our national character, and the widespread interest in their revival, which unites all sections of the community, is one more proof that our class distinctions are really superficial in comparison with the underlying unity of feeling of our people."

The regular subscription list is of course open to any who wish to join hands with the Society, and for this fund contributions should be sent to Mrs. Shuldham Shaw, 2, Buckland Crescent, N.W. 3. But there are some and may be many who prefer anonymity. Any who may wish to help on the *Sharp Memorial Fund* in this way are asked to send their contributions to

The Manager,

MUSIC & LETTERS,

22, Essex Street,

W.C. 2,

using initials or other indication so that it may be acknowledged in a later issue of the magazine, and writing "S. M. F." in the top left hand corner of the envelope.

THE EDITOR.

## MAURICE RAVEL

### SOME NOTES ON HIS ORCHESTRAL METHOD

It is chiefly as a master of orchestration that Maurice Ravel is famous. He is acknowledged an equal of Richard Strauss, Stravinsky and Schönberg in this domain. Actually he is surpassed by none of them. His assured touch is unequalled by any. No one is able to uphold a sustained excellence of workmanship better than he. In all the large expanse of "*Daphnis et Chloé*" there is not one effect that fails. Nothing is left to chance in his scoring.

It is not to be wondered at that this aspect of his ability should take a high place in the popular estimation, for it is one of its most prominent features. Nevertheless, that part of his work which has to do merely with the technique of orchestration is a side issue. It is only of relative importance. It is the adornment of the writer's main thought. Ravel's orchestral technique has a brilliance of its own that makes it liable to obscure the sound construction that lies underneath. With him orchestration is the last consideration, a delightful game, delightful because of the conscious mastery with which it is played—a game in comparison with the greater seriousness of other matters of form and construction which have been worked out previously. The ability to "think instrumentally" has in this connection nothing to do with the actual detail of the work of orchestration. The foundations are laid not there but in the balance of the separate sections. The orchestration is but the pleasant decoration that can be started upon only at such time as the larger work is satisfactorily ended. It would be wrong to look on Ravel simply as a magician in the manipulation of orchestral colours. He certainly is that, in a degree as great as is any living composer. But his real genius is to be sought in the fabric of his compositions, and it is from there that his work derives its surest strength. An orchestral colour is never used for its own sake. It is held in reserve. Nothing is squandered. However many devices there may be ready in the composer's brain, should the right moment for their use not arrive they will remain unused. The form is of first importance. Implicit with that there is the guiding thought. Nothing will be allowed to



obscure either of those principles. In this way Ravel differs from the Schönberg of the "Fünf Orchesterstücke." In that work the continuity of thought is often too slender to allow of such wealth of instrumentation as the composer lavishes upon each piece. Ravel never places an "effect" where there is not an intelligible reason for it. His orchestration, however daring, is always contextual. Thus in "L'Heure Espagnole" the sarrusophone is required to strain his insight to the farthest limit, but to restrain the power of his lungs when, in the final quintet, he finishes the phrase that Inigo has started too low in his register. The abdominal noise of the instrument is meant, above all, as a delicate intimation that the old banker has reached the limit of his powers in love as in voice. The laugh that rises from the audience is a sign that the instrumentalist has over-emphasised a point which in this case has no dimensions. For this is the saddest, or rather the one sad, moment in the whole opera. In that single note are expressed all those feelings of the frailty of human nature and the evanescence of human endeavour that have been aroused by this obese and antiquated lover. So, too, with the *glissandi* trombones in the same opera. The allusions are always discreet, never laboured. In all Ravel's orchestration this will be found to be true. The colour is applied with such a nice divination of values that any but a light touch and perfect apprehension of the meaning of those dynamic directions that the composer places with evident intention will destroy the balance. M. Roland-Manuel has put it in the best way. "In reality he is, with Stravinsky, the one man in the world who best knows the weight of a trombone-note, the harmonics of a 'cello or a *pp* tam-tam in the relationships of one orchestral group to another."

Of the numerous orchestral works that bear his name, three only have been composed in that medium originally, the "Rapsodie Espagnole," "La Valse" and the Tzigane for violin and orchestra. All the others have been written either as accompaniment for the stage, as in "Daphnis et Chloé" and "L'Heure Espagnole," or as a setting of works already written for the pianoforte, "Alborada del gracioso" and "Une barque sur l'océan" (*Miroirs*), "Les Valses Nobles et Sentimentales," "Ma mère l'oye" and "Le tombeau de Couperin." Of these the last three were first orchestrated for use as ballets before their appearance in their present orchestral suite form. This practice of setting a pianoforte work for the orchestra must be considered. It is one in which Ravel continually indulges. The works thus treated undergo a change which, while taking from them the pianistic individuality which all Ravel's pianoforte music possesses, does not thereby cause them to lose the interest they derive from the quality of their thematic and harmonic design. The case may be taken as an example of these qualities weighing heavily in the

final worth of a work. Ability for the writing of pianistically sound music might result in work which would live for a time through that one quality. Brilliant orchestration could keep a poor work alive for a surprisingly long time. But to take away the material "effectiveness" of a piece would be to leave nothing on which to work for transposition to the new medium. In the grafting of the different technique the movement would go to pieces. Ravel never alters a note of the works that he takes from the pianoforte and places in the orchestra. On the same foundation he builds up a version in which the original colours are made more brilliant and the light and shade more contrasted. It is this heightened contrast that distinguishes the orchestral from the pianoforte form and alters the values in such a way as to transform them into fresh manifestations of the same ideas.\* The ease with which the orchestra can perform certain passages which are of extreme difficulty for the pianist and, conversely, the loss of intimacy in many passages where a subtle change of feeling is only obtainable on an instrument with unity of control, these considerations alter the character of the works. The same ease of accomplishment which the orchestra cannot escape robs the passage of the verve that a good pianist can give it. By way of example, suppose an orchestral version of the Hammerklavier sonata. On the pianoforte the laborious and embarrassing difficulties of presentation increase the interest of the sonata. The strife which goes on between the executant and the unwieldy material adds to the significance of the work. Place the sonata in the orchestra, with an instrument to each line of counterpoint and the gain in clarity and precision will be found to be a loss in personality. The character of the work will have altered. On the other hand, the sense of continuity is strengthened by the orchestra, the rhythm is in no danger of being lost, and the architecture of the work stands out the more plainly when shorn of any display of personal brilliance in performance.

The magnitude of the change wrought by transposition from pianoforte to orchestra can be seen in the sixth of the "Valse Nobles et Sentimentales." In the pianoforte version the waltz is restless and peripatetic, almost too unbalanced to be graceful, too breathless to be balanced. In the orchestral version all that is smoothed away. Oboe and clarinet breathe forth phrases that seem the very soul of languor and fine feeling. Pizzicato strings insist on a gentle rhythm that now is wayward enough to enhance the restfulness of the placid wood-wind.

\* In March, 1912, Ravel wrote (S.I.M.) with regard to Casella's arrangement for orchestra of Balakirev's "Islamey" that "it was nearly impossible, and really practically useless, to transfer pianoforte effects to the orchestra."

Ex:1 Clts. Oboe.

Vns. Bsn. p

pizz.

pizz. C. bassi 8va lower.

Cor. Ang. Clt. pizz.

The character of the movement has been transformed. Similarly, in the *Forlane*, from the "Tombeau de Couperin," the orchestra does not merely increase or diminish, but it definitely alters the meaning of the work. That which, on the pianoforte, was a continual variance of shades has become a pleasant monotony of the wood-wind.

Ex:2 Flutes.

pp

p

pp

f

pp

Bsn.

The inevitable elimination of the pianist's alert variations of tone hardens the outlines of the phrases and sharpens their insistence. With the greater intensity of the orchestral version in the *Pavane de la Belle au Bois Dormant* the music is renewed with fresh implications. There are to be found some places where the phrasing of the actual finger-work seems to have been transferred to the orchestra. Such are passages from the serenade in the middle of "Alborada del

gracioso." They illustrate a fortuitous coincidence rather than a deliberate effect.

The "Rapsodie Espagnole" is in four movements linked by the theme of four notes:

Ex: 3



that appears in this form in three of the four sections. The first movement is a slow *Prélude à la Nuit*, very sustained, never rising above a *mezzo-forte*, the four-note figure being heard all through. The next, *Malaguena*, continues without a break from the last movement. The pizzicato contrabasses set out the theme of the dance with the four-note figure in the second bar:

Ex: 4



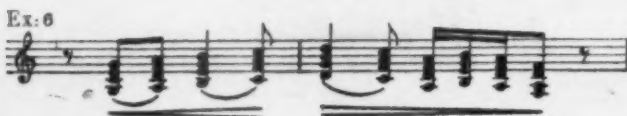
This persists with subtle changes and many charming "Spanish" decorations until the trumpet shrills out a second theme, starting high and drooping through the four notes to a point of repose. The part played by these four downward-tending notes must be realised if the meaning of the Rapsodie is to be caught. The only movement in which they do not appear is the third, the *Habanera*, which formed part of the early "Sites Auriculaires," and was composed for piano-forte duet in 1895. This section is built on a persistent C sharp pedal that is present through all the movement. On this the two forms of *Habanera* rhythm, in combined triple and duple time, or in the latter alone, are kept going. The main theme is founded on four upward-tending notes:

Ex: 5



that may be considered as the original of which the opening figure of the Rapsodie is the inversion, but which have also another significance as a complete contrast to the other movements, all of

which have the falling phrase for foundation. Only in the last movement is there a broad tune, the first half of which is a development of the rising theme of the Habanera, and which then droops downwards again and is answered in the next bar a tone lower :



The whole work, filled with the sensation induced by this phrase, has a highly artificial feeling. The gaiety labours with an overpowering lassitude. It needs continual extraneous propulsion for the renewal of its vitality. The last movement ends in an ecstatic shout. But it is like the last leap of a stage dancer, the finish of an exhausting exhibition of what may appear to be pure fancy, but is in reality concentrated labour. The energy does not come from within. It is the expression of a will that is prompt to be gay to order. Thus it is distinct from either the spontaneity of Rimski-Korsakov or the dryness of Moskovski. A hard veracity is the most apparent characteristic of this Rapsodie.

"La Valse" is complete in one movement of triple time. As an evocation of the Viennese ballroom of 1885, it lacks point. It stands far distant from Johann Strauss or Oscar Straus, farther still from the dance tunes of *Rosenkavalier*. But the glare of the room, the heat of the atmosphere, the monotony and cheapness of sensation, all that is portrayed in the tirelessness and banality of the importunate rhythm. Some of the music is pleasing. Some is so bitter as to produce pain. There is not one tune, viewed as an actual theme apart from the way in which it is treated (which is quite shallow) that does not sound obvious. And yet there is no feeling of sarcasm in the work. Rather, a sad sardonic humour, as though it were, after all, poor sport thus to lay bare the lives of these dancers and to expose them in all their eternal superficiality. The work is sadder than Sibelius, more saccharine than Waldteufel, and infinitely more *macabre* than Saint-Saens.

The *Tzigane* is a short virtuoso piece in which the musical interest is slender, and attention is turned to the brilliant writing for the solo instrument. The work opens with a succession of cadenza passages for the violin, all more or less Hungarian in character, all void of interest apart from a growing wonder at the pyrotechnic display. The cadenza prelude occupies a comparatively large part of the whole work



(67 out of 341 bars), and leads without a break into the tzigane proper. From thence onwards the violin embroiders little snatches of gipsy tunes, or insists on small rhythmic groups, while the orchestra follows after with an almost painful dutifulness. The whole display is successful of its kind. But its kind is dull.

The ballets that Ravel has made from the "Valse Nobles et Sentimentales" (*Adélaïde*) and from "Ma Mère l'oye" do not differ from the original pianoforte pieces. In "Ma Mère l'oye" the separate numbers are joined by means of some bars of quasi-recitative that carry the action of the ballet from point to point and introduce each new section. The *Prélude* and the *Danse du Rouet* are to be found only in the ballet version. The first opens with the horn theme that is heard at the end of *Le Jardin Féerique*:



and elaborates the tune of *Petit Poucet*. This leads straight into the *Danse* which opens the ballet proper, and which, in its turn, leads by way of the scene of the pricking of the Princess's finger and the preparation for the long sleep, into the *Pavane de la Belle au Bois Dormant*, the first number of the original suite.

All the movements of the pianoforte suite "Le Tombeau de Couperin" have been orchestrated except the Fugue and the Toccata. In the orchestral version the Rigaudon and the Menuet change places, the former being placed as a more suitable finish to the suite. The method of orchestration is slightly different from that of the "Valse Nobles et Sentimentales" owing to the different character of the music. The collection of instruments is a small one with only two horns and one trumpet. There is much delicate passage work for wood-wind, and the effects that on the pianoforte were of most outstanding importance, such as the contrapuntal passages in the Forlane, the rapid finger-work in the Prelude, the opening of the Menuet, are scored for these instruments. The opening and ending of the Rigaudon have brilliant fanfares for trumpet. All through the suite the strings play a subsidiary part. In the Forlane they come forward for a few moments of short duration, and only in the Menuet do they have, for some bars in the *Musette*, a definite solo passage to deal with.

The orchestra employed in "Daphnis et Chloé" is larger than any that Ravel has so far used. It exceeds that of "L'Heure Espagnole" by the use of a G flute, an E flat clarinet, one extra

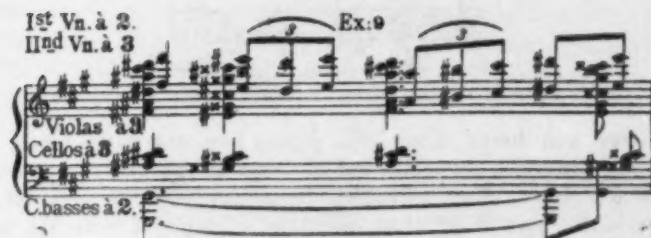
bassoon, a double-bassoon (the opera has a sarrusophone) and two extra trumpets. It exceeds the orchestra of "La Valse" by the same extra wood-wind instruments (except the double-bassoon) and one trumpet. The orchestra, which here has to interpret the stage-action (and a very complicated stage-action at that), is used in a different way from that of the two works mentioned above. In "L'Heure Espagnole" the stage is taken up by the singers. The orchestra discreetly accompanies them in their exposition of the story, faithfully following their intonation, keeping pace with their movements. In "La Valse" there is no stage, and the orchestra can be used as a vehicle for the expression of unfettered fancy. In "Daphnis et Chloé" much more remains with the orchestra. The responsibility for clarity of exposition rests to a large extent with it. The dancers give the main outlines of the tale, and in a number of step dances limn forth the aesthetic content of the scenes. The music must underline, or refrain from underlining the points of the story as occasion may seem to demand. It must support the steps of the dancers. Then it is that a skilful composer can save a ballet, and one who is heavy-handed, ruin it. With so much to do, so many characters to portray, and, above all, with so much conterminous action to steer a course through, a large orchestra and a very personal treatment of each instrument are necessary.

Ex: 8



In "Daphnis et Chloé" the strings are much divided and often. By this means the wood-wind is left free for the closer portrayal of character and the brass for that of crowds. Ravel uses an eight-part choir of wordless voices which, in general, aids the effect of the brass and at one moment (when darkness descends at the division between acts one and two) is used alone. Until this work the division of strings had always been used by Ravel for effects of colour. Held chords in the "Valse Nobles et Sentimentales" (a), stretched pizzicato chords in the "Rapsodie Espagnole" (b), shakes in "Ma Mère l'oye" (c). In the *Danse Religieuse* in "Daphnis et Chloé" there can be found

the first extended use of a procedure that had been employed for a few bars only in preceding works :



The upper strings are divided into six or eight parts and move in extended order over the length and breadth of a theme, filling out the tune with complete harmonies and leaving to the wood-wind the doubling of a phrase here and there or the interpolation of a second theme whose presence is demanded by the action on the stage. This procedure, which recalls the methods of Teutonic composers, is necessitated partly by the stage which needs some kind of balance in the music for the manifold activities of its concerted dances, and so forces the strings to play an enormous part in their effort to support the whole orchestra. Partly, again, it is occasioned by the extreme activity of the wood-wind, a characteristic which is frequently to be met with in Ravel's orchestration, but which in "Daphnis et Chloé" is much developed. Where in other works, such as the "Rapsodie Espagnole" and the "Valse Nobles et Sentimentales," the wood-wind have passages of very artistically arranged doubling of the strings and perhaps an expressive span of solo work, thrown from instrument to instrument in a flowing cadenza, in "Daphnis et Chloé," from the moment when oboe and flute announce the arrival of shepherds and shepherdesses, to that when, in the last scene, the concerted wood-wind portrays the morning rills flowing to the plain, these instruments are employed without respite. They are used for many forms of expression, from the choral writing of the *Danse Religieuse* to the snatches of semiquavers in the scene of the spirits and in the bird-songs in the last act. It is the emancipation, insisted on by Rimski-Korsakov, brought to a pitch of highest development, the brilliant effects of "Mlada" and the splendour of the "Capriccio Espagnole." In the same way the brass is treated with freedom and elasticity. As the curtain rises at the sixth bar of the ballet the horns enter

*pianissimo* and sound the rocking theme that later will be announced by the hidden choir :

Ex: 10 3 Horns.



Voices and horns throw the phrase from one to the other, rise together through a crescendo and die away as the first dancer comes on to the stage. The trumpet enters, muted, with the same theme. It is in the second act that the brass is employed with the most deliberate effect. Trombones blare out the themes of the brigand's dance. Diatonic and chromatic passages alternate for horn and trumpet. The writing for the latter is daring and precipitous.

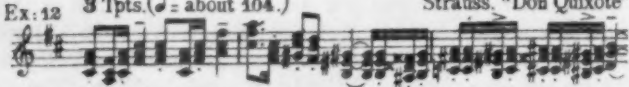
Ex: 11 3 Tpts. (♩ = 138)



In this respect it is reminiscent of Strauss' use of the instrument in "Don Quixote."

Ex: 12 3 Tpts. (♩ = about 104.)

Strauss, "Don Quixote"



The broad generalisations of the ballet-stage call for similar thematic treatment of the music. Ravel has met this by the inclusion of a bold melodic outline in the last act. The treatment of this melody is worth some consideration. The act opens with the sound of the rippling mountain streams. Flutes and glissando harp give out the first bar of falling and rising notes.

Ex: 13 2 Flutes.



They are answered in the next bar by clarinet and second harp. And thus, treating the idea antiphonally, harps and wood-wind continue the movement, accompanied by the deep notes of the lower strings and held chords in the middle and upper ones. Gradually the way is prepared harmonically. The first bassoon and half the contrabasses breathe forth the first notes of the tune itself, a melodic introduction that rises up a ladder of fifths to a climax and dies away. The time for the unfolding of the principal melody has come.



Now the strings take up the rippling wood-wind figure alone and leave the rest of the orchestra silent but for a solo clarinet doubled by all the violas in unison. These deal with the first utterance of the main theme and are joined by bass-clarinet and 'cellos in counterpoint at the third bar. After the first section of the melody the E-flat clarinet enters and interrupts while a shepherd wanders across the scene with his flock.

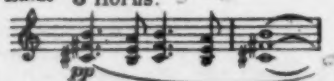


The stage empty once more, the tune goes on its way and the second part is heard, more insistent now and reinforced by another clarinet and by the violas in octaves. A fresh piping theme from the E-flat clarinet and now the melody goes uninterruptedly onward. Gradually the whole orchestra, first the flutes, then the cor anglais and the oboes, is drawn into its design. In the last bar the strings imperceptibly give back to the wood-wind their original rippling figure and are then ready at once to begin on a repetition of the melody, broadened and loudened by their help, while voices and horns enter and the trumpets shrill out the final climax.



*pianissimo* and sound the rocking theme that later will be announced by the hidden choir:

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After some pages taken up with descriptive portrayal of action on the stage, but always held together by the persistence of the rippling theme in the wood-wind, the first bar of the main melody is used again to build up a great climax, longer in arriving and more brilliant when reached than the first.

A comparison between this scene and a similar one in *Jeux des vagues*, the second movement of Debussy's symphonic sketch "La Mer," shows a striking degree of dissimilarity in the orchestral methods of the two composers. There comes a moment in "La Mer" when certain aspects of the waves, their suddenness, their broken crests, the play of light upon their uneven surfaces, all this has been discussed and enlarged upon with great aptitude of design and orchestral expressiveness. But now it is necessary, as it was in the last act of "Daphnis et Chloé," to produce an impression of breadth and well-founded stability in order to bind the movement together and give it structural form. The strings and harp start in, softly but with extreme animation, upon the theme of four bars that is to effect this change.



At the third bar broken wood-wind passages are interpolated in the same register as that of the middle strings. At the fifth bar the brass enters, and at the seventh the trumpet. The climax comes at

the fourth repetition of the theme (which, unlike the long melody of "Daphnis et Chloé," is in two short spans of four bars each) and eight bars further on the bass, hitherto immovable, is raised to the supertonic. The harmonies are severely diatonic, in contrast to the whole-tone colour that has prevailed up to that point. Apart from the immobility of the bass, a procedure which Debussy used with much effect in "Fêtes," but which Ravel seldom employs, the two passages show the discriminating method of Ravel contrasted with the more intuitive method of Debussy. In the passage quoted from "La Mer" there is a sensation of insecurity, occasioned by the much-divided upper strings playing often unsupported in the higher register where they overbalance the single melodic line of the 'cellos, bound down to the stationary bass.

In the dawn scene in "Daphnis et Chloé" the instruments are marshalled with larger assurance and the outlines built up with a deeper constructional sense. This scene shows Ravel at his greatest not only as a manipulator of orchestral colour, but as a designer of movements. It comes at a point where the action on the stage is such that freedom from the restlessness of the protagonists can be utilised for a scene that is strongly built and boldly expressed. It is the fit moment for a set piece which, by that very fact of its exquisite formality, will lay hold upon the attention of the hearer. The presence of Nature, by turns benign and awful, that presence which must have been in Longus' thoughts when he wrote his delicate descriptions, is here portrayed with a knowledge so sure and a dignity so imperturbable as to confirm the whole work and create a feeling of strong purposefulness. The scene and what follows, to the end of the ballet, form the second of the two orchestral suites that have been taken from the main body of the work for purposes of concert performance. When the movements are thus separated from considerations of the stage the excellence of the orchestral workmanship can the more easily be realised. The orchestration never falters, nor fails the musical utterance that it has to interpret. Rimsky-Korsakov himself, whose example has had a great effect on Ravel's methods, could not but have been satisfied with such a show of skill.

SCOTT GODDARD.

## GIOVANNI SGAMBATI

GIOVANNI SGAMBATI was born at Rome in 1843, and was the son of a lawyer well known in Roman society. His father was a man of cultivated intelligence, with a fine artistic sense, and spent much of his time among the foreign painters and sculptors in Rome. He thus met the daughter of the English sculptor, Joseph Gott, whom he eventually married, and to whom their son Giovanni owed his ample and well-planned education.

Sgambati's first master was Amerigo Barbieri. The boy very soon gave evidence of a lively aptitude; at five, his performances on the piano excited much applause in the houses of the Roman nobles where he was taken to play; at six, he began to appear in public, to sing at the Cappella di S. Maria Maggiore, and to conduct a small orchestra. In 1849, however, all these activities were cut short by the death of his father, after a brief illness, and the consequent removal of the family to Trevi, in Umbria. There Giovanni was fortunately able to continue his musical education under Natalucci, a competent master, with whom he learned harmony and perfected his piano technique. The years spent at Trevi were the happiest in Sgambati's life; he said that it was during this period that he discovered in himself an irresistible bent towards music and became possessed with the idea of devoting his whole life to the art.

In 1860 he returned to Rome. He again began to give public concerts, and immediately evoked a large amount of sympathy and admiration. It was natural that the young pianist should make a considerable stir in Roman artistic circles, for, apart from his qualities as a performer, he was the means of revealing to the public many of the greatest works of the classic composers, till then entirely unknown in Italy. This side of his activities brought him many friends among the more intellectual groups of the Roman aristocracy, and created a strong movement of interest in music. From this time date the musical gatherings in the studios of painters and sculptors, where a small circle of intellectuals made their first acquaintance, through the medium of Sgambati's interpretation, with the sonatas of Mozart, Scarlatti, and Beethoven.

While Sgambati was thus introducing the classics to Roman audiences, he was also zealously pursuing his studies; he perfected himself in counterpoint under Aldega, and in 1866 was made an honorary



member of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia. In the same year his old master, Natalucci, died, and Sgambati, who had never ceased to regard him with great veneration, conducted a funeral mass in his honour.

About this time the musical life of Rome received a new impulse from the institution of chamber music concerts, to the organisation of which Tullio Ramaciotti, newly returned from Paris, devoted himself with enthusiasm. These concerts were at first held at a hall in the Via del Vantaggio, and there, during one of them, Sgambati was introduced to Franz Liszt, an event which was to prove of great importance in his life. The great Hungarian pianist at once became interested in the young man, who appeared to him to be temperamentally gifted in an exceptional degree. Liszt had come to Rome for a rest, and was living on Monte Mario, but came down twice a week to give lessons to Sgambati. From that time forward, the most cordial and intimate relations existed between the two artists, with much benefit to the development of music in Rome. Together they worked strenuously for the revival of instrumental music, and an orchestra was formed which gave concerts in the Sala di Dante under Sgambati's direction. Liszt was enthusiastic over Sgambati's execution, and wrote to a friend: "In Sgambati there is something of both Bonsart and Tausig; a singular combination, don't you think, for a pure-blooded Italian, who has eyes, too, as beautiful as those of the King of Bavaria!" In the course of the concerts in the Sala di Dante Sgambati introduced Beethoven's symphonies to the Roman public, also many of Liszt's compositions, including the Dante Symphony.

In 1869 he visited Germany with Liszt, thereby coming into contact with the most interesting currents of German music and making acquaintance with the development in executive technique which had taken place in that country. On his return to Rome he began to teach again with renewed ardour. He started a class for non-paying pupils, which soon outgrew the space available in his house. At Sgambati's request the Accademia Pontifica di Santa Cecilia granted him the necessary accommodation, and his classes were the original nucleus of the school which eventually became the Liceo di Santa Cecilia. Sgambati's example was followed by others, Pinelli, Orsini and Forina holding classes for the violin, violoncello and singing, so that when the Accademia, on October 12, 1876, voted for the institution of the Liceo, this was virtually already in being and functioning.

Meanwhile Sgambati had not neglected the art of composition; during this period he wrote two quintets for strings and piano, also various works for voice and piano. In 1876 he made the acquaintance of Richard Wagner, who was in Rome that year and heard some of Sgambati's compositions at a reception given by the German Amba-

sador; he interested himself in their publication and wrote about them to Schott, the publisher, who was glad to comply with the master's request, and printed the two quintets and some of the piano pieces.

Sgambati was devotedly attached to Rome and the life there; in fact, as he said himself, he could scarcely bear to be out of sight of the dome of St. Peter's; and he refused an invitation to become Rubinstein's successor at the Moscow Conservatoire. Among his other activities he occupied himself with criticism and æsthetics (he wrote for the periodical *L'Art en Italie*), devoted himself more and more to teaching, and continued to compose. In 1881 he wrote the Symphony in D minor, which was played first at the Sala di Dante, later at the Quirinal, before the King and Queen of Italy, and obtained an immense success. He founded the Court Quintet, with the violinists Pinelli and Monachisi, the viola-player Romola Jacobacci, and the cellist Fiorino. This body first made Rome acquainted with the chamber works of the classic and romantic schools.

In 1881, Sgambati went to England to give a series of concerts; on May 11 he played to an enthusiastic audience at a Philharmonic concert, and on June 10 he conducted a performance of his Symphony, which was warmly received by the English public. In 1884 he played in Paris at the international concerts given at the Trocadero, and he was made a corresponding member of the Institut de France. In 1887 he made a long tour in Germany, and in 1903 he travelled in Russia, where his art aroused immense enthusiasm.

After 1903 he retired from his public activities and lived quietly in Rome, surrounded by the affection of his many disciples, and persisting in his work as a teacher until the last day of his life, which ended peacefully in his native city, December 14, 1914.

Sgambati's life and work were of considerable importance in the musical history of Italy, for he marks the beginning of the renaissance in that country of instrumental music, which had been in abeyance there for a whole century. In order to understand his achievement aright it is necessary to examine the causes and the consequences of this abstention of Italian composers from the field of symphonic-instrumental music during the late eighteenth and the greater part of the nineteenth centuries, at the very time, in fact, when in France and Germany symphonic and chamber music were receiving their strongest impetus.

In Italy, during this period, music found scarcely any public expression save in opera, which had inherited the last manifestations of the instrumental tradition developed in the eighteenth century, and confined itself to the only type of music the public cared to hear.

Eighteenth century Italian music exhibits a process of simplification; the polyphonic conception, which, at about the same time, J. S. Bach raised to so great a height of emotional expression, gained only lukewarm supporters in Italy. This was the glorious period when Italian composers found their natural expression in linear form, to which decisive and well-linked rhythms gave life, continuity, and variety of design. It was the period of Scarlatti, Vivaldi, Boccherini, and Porpora, whose works, while proving them to be the children of their time in that they could not altogether free themselves from certain fugal and contrapuntal forms, also possess special characteristics which distinguish them from the schools of other countries. Then came the decay of the polyphonic tradition, which, if it had given rise to a harmonic system (more especially through the work of Monteverde) had left behind no harmonic tradition in Italy; for the species is entirely foreign to the Italian spirit. In the instrumental field, Italian composers had to go back to the brief tradition built up during the hundred years in which her school of organists flourished. None of these (with the possible exception of Frescobaldi) were outstanding figures in musical history, just because their music is of an essentially vocal character, a kind of *monodisation* of polyphony—an attempt, in short, to express in a single line what others had expressed in many. As a method of expression the result was incomplete and often arbitrary, because of the absence of words, which in polyphonic vocal music played an important part in the distribution and ordering of the notes.

The music of this brief period, characterised by the concentration of the interest in a single part as against the several voices of choral music, was the source of the later Italian music of definitely instrumental character, for strings, harpsichord, or orchestra, when the rather shapeless melodic line of the organists was given soul and form by means of rhythm.

The renaissance was succeeded by what may be called a *classical* period, which saw the rise of the Italian sonata-form (monothematic) and an Italianised development of the concerto and symphony, the last-named chiefly through the works of Sammartini, and compositions for various instruments which lie forgotten in libraries.

But just as in Germany the clearly defined construction which continued in use without interruption from Bach to Mozart began to yield to the plan of a predominant theme, the working-out and variations of which take place in a flow of restless and unstable harmonies, so among Italian composers there appeared a tendency to break through the rhythmic barriers which confined the music within a definite design, and thus to give the melodic line a new freedom and amplitude. This tendency is analogous to that which in poetry has recently led to the abandonment of regular verse-forms in favour

of unrhymed lines in irregular sequence. This was the beginning of musical romanticism, and the effect was to make Italian music become increasingly vocal in character, and, consequently, to devote itself more and more to the stage, which provided a dignified setting for song.

As has already been said, German romanticism destroyed the clarity inherent in contrapuntal form, but, on the other hand, it was responsible for giving predominance to the *theme* with its definite character, and so opened the door to the whole range of harmonic possibilities which were ultimately exhausted by Wagner with his chromaticism; in short, the movement enriched both symphonic and chamber music.

Italian romanticism, on the contrary, broke through the bonds of rhythm, and, producing a musical form which permitted the greatest possible freedom of construction, did away with certain possibilities of instrumental expression, which depends so largely upon rhythm, as well as harmony. For this reason, Italian instrumental music, as it gradually lost its more vital elements, became more and more vocal in character until at last it was exclusively an art of song.

Herein lies the reason of the seemingly strange phenomenon that, while in Germany and (though less so) in France instrumental forms occupied the foremost place, in Italy they were entirely neglected in favour of opera, which alone occupied the field during the nineteenth century.

The Italian instrumental tradition hung therefore on a very slender thread; moreover, one end of the thread was attached to opera; that is to say, the tradition was really based on the operatic overture. This species of composition remained definitely instrumental in character except in Rossini's operas. Rossini (with a few others) was the direct heir of the Italian eighteenth century instrumental composers, inasmuch as his music follows a definite rhythmic design. If we analyse any one of his overtures it becomes evident that his instrumental quality is a result of this rhythmic design. But though Rossini, Bellini, and one or two others preserved something of the classic spirit, at all events in this particular kind of composition, the instrumental music of all the other great Italian composers is conceived in the same manner as their songs; for example, in most cases Verdi's overtures are essentially vocal music transcribed for the orchestra.

There is no need to lament over this neglect of instrumental music by Italian composers, because the natural expression of Italian musical romanticism is in song, and this art of song has had moments of grandeur unsurpassed in the most famous instrumental works.

This fact, however, does not justify the conclusion, so often drawn,

that there can be no creative Italian music outside the domain of opera. This notion is false, because Italian vocal music is directly descended from the instrumental species, and because for about thirty years the composers have been turning once more towards instrumental and symphonic compositions. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, indeed, some very significant symptoms were observable; for instance, the appearance and the acceptance of an opera like *Meisak, ele*, a work of historical importance, which gives a decided prominence to the instrumental side, owing more to Wagnerism than is generally recognised, and above all, the composition of such a work as *Falstaff*, which demonstrates the necessity of a return to the principle of rhythmic design characteristic of the eighteenth century.

Concurrently with the appearance of these two works, a need began to be felt for other kinds of composition besides opera; in other words, there was an ever-growing desire for free musical expression, unfettered by the exigencies of dramatic construction. This change, which was partly brought about by the study of German works, had its origin in the fact that nineteenth century romantic opera had by that time uttered its final word and reached its highest point of expression, and was beginning to decline. Verdi himself, in the last years of his life, felt the necessity of a renewal, recognising the impossibility of persistence in a form which, having already fulfilled itself completely, belonged to the past and could have no future. Thus composers who desired neither to be involved in its ever-accelerating descent, nor to be reduced to mere imitation of Wagnerian drama, had no alternative but to turn back to instrumental music.

This return to music of an exclusively instrumental nature was chiefly the work of Sgambati. A pianist of exceptional ability, he was obliged, in order to give full scope to his concert work, to have recourse to that vast body of German romantic compositions which up to that time had found but few followers in Italy, and was little known in the musical world there. He thereby introduced an element which was to play a very important part in the renaissance of Italian music, and which still endeavours to impose its influence in Italy, although it has now been definitely rejected. The Teutonic influence amounted, in truth, to an imposition of something entirely alien to the Italian character. It was precisely during the romantic period that the Italian school drew away from the others, and assumed a character which was directly derived from her own eighteenth century style: namely, a loosening of the rhythms and the substitution of an emphasis based on the articulation of words: a character impossible to reconcile with that of instrumental music, so that the composers were driven by sheer necessity to express themselves through the



medium of operatic art. Whereas, on the contrary, German romantic music, whose essential quality is harmonic instability, so that it lends itself to the expression of varying moods and the introduction of unforeseen effects, possesses infinite instrumental possibilities, giving scope for the employment of a great variety of instruments and instrumental groupings, and has been productive of very rich results.

Thus those Italian composers who at the end of the nineteenth century began to cultivate the instrumental field, inherited, on the one hand, an operatic tradition from which they were bent on escaping, and on the other, a rich output of instrumental composition, chiefly of German derivation, which offered unlimited possibilities as regards both execution and study, and, incidentally, imitation.

Hence Italian musical culture was permeated to a large extent by German ideas, which invaded the conservatoires, the concert halls, and the mind of the public, to such an extent as to cause forgetfulness of the more live native tradition. Only now is the world enabled to realise the value of the treasure which this tradition holds in its keeping.

Sgambati was the pioneer of the German infiltration, which he facilitated both as executant and composer. Notwithstanding this fact, his work undoubtedly laid the foundations of the recent revival of instrumental music in Italy, for he erected the first barrier that diverted a portion of the musical stream which was pouring itself into opera and caused it to flow into the instrumental channel.

In Sgambati's works two characteristics stand out clearly: his attachment to both classical and romantic German musical forms, and a thematic and harmonic scheme which naturally adapts itself to those forms. In the instrumental music of the nineteenth century we see, side by side with the composition of works of formal and, so to speak, traditional construction, the rise and growth of free composition and variety of expression; and, similarly, Sgambati's music includes not only compositions of an essentially formal type, such as the quartet, the two quintets, the symphonies, the pianoforte concerto, &c., but also works of a freer and more varied character, songs, nocturnes, suites, &c. Thus, even in its outward aspect, his work has some kinship with that of the nineteenth century German composers.

A large part of Sgambati's music is cast in sonata form. This form, which attained its classic expression in the eighteenth century, became fully defined in Germany, where it was quickened and perfected by Haydn and Mozart, and became, finally, transformed by contact with the mind of Beethoven. In this master's hands the

thematic treatment acquired a freedom and elasticity unknown before; the succession of prescribed harmonies which defined the structure was broken up and interspersed with passages of unexpected tonality, the prevailing mood suggesting the restlessness characteristic of German musical romanticism.

In this way, through the development of its material, and a harmonic texture which already showed a tendency towards chromaticism, the classic sonata became romantic. With the rise of Brahms the sonata is seen to be surrounded by a new atmosphere, for in the works of this composer the design again began to retreat within the rigid lines of the classic period. It was, however, the sonata form of Beethoven, not that of Mozart, that Brahms bound with his bands of iron; his compositions display neither the agility nor the vitality of the eighteenth century style; their main characteristics are robustness, breadth and complexity. This treatment of form caused Brahms to be labelled neo-classic by those who overlooked the fact that all his harmonic treatment is essentially that of the German romantic school, and is the root cause of the discrepancy observable throughout his work between the severity of the forms and a harmonic substance which, on the contrary, demands elasticity and variety of movement.

To this type of sonata form may be referred Sgambati's quasi-classic works such as those referred to above. The nobility of the themes, the inevitable quality of their developments, the large design, show convincingly that the art form evolved by Sgambati with such earnest and loving care is directly descended from the most highly developed manifestations of German romanticism. Moreover, in his critical writings, the composer leaves no doubt as to his æsthetic standpoint when he emphasises the especial importance of the evolution of harmonic treatment in German music, an evolution which he considered to have been the basis of the ultimate development of instrumental music.

In his minor works, which are somewhat suggestive of the manner of Schumann, we are immediately aware of a greater freedom and a fresher, more vital atmosphere. Here the melodies are given all the space they need, and their treatment seems to grow from their inner nature instead of conforming to a pattern imposed from without. These appear to the writer to be Sgambati's best works; if they are not entirely individual and personal, they nevertheless leave room for the expression of all that is most sincere and alive in the composer's soul. We have said that even these works are reminiscent of Schumann, but the resemblance is chiefly in the harmonic texture. This is of a kind non-existent in Italian musical tradition, and its gradual development and transformation can be traced in Germany

from Bach to Strauss and beyond him; it is a vital and unmistakable feature of German music.

Among Sgambati's minor compositions should especially be mentioned the six nocturnes—which differ considerably in general idea and treatment, from those of Chopin, many of the lyrics for voice and piano, especially those in which the melody is disposed in a natural manner according to the pattern of the song (e.g., the four Italian songs for voice and piano) and many of the piano pieces (as for example the *Four Pieces*) in which a fresh melodic vein and a fine sense of poetry achieve a convincing emotional effect.

After Sgambati had come to maturity as a composer, the worth and significance of his work were clearly recognised. The time has not yet come to analyse and appraise this work, but Sgambati's historical importance rests on the fact that his methods have been imitated and followed in Italy. It was he who initiated that definite trend towards instrumental music which is intensifying every day. At this moment the conviction is gaining ground among musicians that nineteenth century Italian opera, which was the living expression of Italian musical romanticism, has already uttered its most eloquent phrases. The conviction which drove Sgambati to break the thread of a tradition in order to find a new method of expression, even though it were an imitation of German romanticism, shows itself even more strongly in the composers who came after, and in the public which holds the scales. The need was keenly felt for a new form which should express directly, that is, without reference to any dramatic scheme, whatever music is capable of expressing, so that the return to instrumental music was felt to be an absolute necessity. The work of Sgambati, the first advocate and supporter of this return, is of real importance in musical history; if he said nothing that was absolutely new, it was he, at all events, who pointed the way which Italian composers are now treading in ever greater numbers, with growing confidence, and with increasing success.

A. CASELLA.

Translated by L. C. THORNBURN.

## SGAMBATI'S WORKS.

- Op. 1. Album of 5 songs.  
 2. Album of 10 songs.  
 3. Nocturne for pianoforte.  
 4. Quintet for pianoforte, two violins, viola, and violoncello.  
 5. Quintet for pianoforte, two violins, viola, and violoncello.  
 6. Prelude and Fugue, for pianoforte in E flat major.  
 7. Two pianoforte studies.  
 8. *Fogli volanti* (Fugitive Leaves) for pianoforte.  
 9. Gavotte for pianoforte.  
 10. Concerto for pianoforte and orchestra in G minor.  
 11. Symphony in D minor.  
 12. Quartet in D minor.  
 13. Four pianoforte pieces (Prelude, Minuet, Elegy, Toccata).  
 14. Four Italian songs for voice and pianoforte.  
 15. Three nocturnes for pianoforte.  
 16. Suite for pianoforte.  
 17. *Passiflora*, for voice and pianoforte.  
 20. *Te Deum Laudamus*: Andante for strings and organ.  
 21. *Te Deum Laudamus*: Andante for orchestra.  
 22. *Gondoliera*, for violin and pianoforte.  
 23. Wedding Benediction, for organ.  
 24. Five nocturnes, for pianoforte.  
 25. *Melodia Lirica*: four songs.  
 26. Six nocturnes, for pianoforte.  
 27. "*Vera est in luctum cythara mea*": motet for baritone, strings and organ.  
 28. Four melodies for voice and pianoforte.  
 29. 12 poetical melodies for the pianoforte.  
 30. "*Tout Bas*": for voice and pianoforte.  
 38. Requiem Mass, for chorus, baritone solo, orchestra and organ.  
 42. Three pianoforte pieces.

## WORKS WITHOUT OPUS NUMBER.

- Serenata for voice and piano.  
 Ballata for tenor.  
*Stornelli Toscani*, for voice and pianoforte.  
 Romanza senza Parole for pianoforte.  
 "Il faut aimer": gavotte for the voice.  
 "La Pia Stella": melody.  
 Five Lyric melodies and a duet.  
 Two songs.  
 Two melodies.

## TRANSCRIPTIONS.

- Liszt. "Die Ideale": pianoforte duet.  
 Chopin. Lithuanian song: pianoforte solo.  
 Gluck. Song of Orpheus: pianoforte solo.

## UNPUBLISHED WORKS.

- Second Symphony in E minor.  
 Symphonic Epithalamium in five parts.  
 Festival Overture.

## JOHN TAVERNER --Part II\*

A YEAR ago the present writer reviewed the first volume of Taverner's works in the Tudor Church Music series now in course of publication by the Carnegie Trustees. As a matter of fact, the second volume was issued shortly after the first, and some months before the appearance of our article; but in view of the importance of the publication it was thought desirable to postpone its consideration until a future occasion.

This second volume contains all Taverner's Church Music at present discovered, other than the Masses included in the first volume—some forty compositions of varying dimensions, which the editors have collected and pieced together from upwards of twenty different MSS. scattered about in various libraries, public and private.

The contents of the volume are of great interest, not only in themselves, but as furnishing examples of the various forms of Church music practised in Henry VIII's time, of which the editors have given a short account in the Historical Survey prefixed to the first volume (pp. xxiii. and xxiv.). The contents of the volume may be summarised as follows:

1. Three settings of the *Magnificat*—one for four voices (Tone 6), one for five voices (apparently Tone 2), and one for six voices (Tone 1). Of the last two, one part is unfortunately missing from the MSS., and this the editors have rewritten with skill and judgment, as in the case of one or two of the Masses in the first volume.

2. A setting of the *Te Deum* for five men's voices. Here, too, the Tenor part is missing: but as this consists of the Plainchant melody except in one short section, we may consider that we have the piece substantially as Taverner wrote it.

3. A separate four-part *Kyrie* entitled "Le Roy," founded on a melody frequently treated by English composers—a melody which, since it does not occur in the printed Sarum Gradual of 1592, is probably of secular origin. Here, also, we may notice two short *Alleluias*, which were evidently intended to be sung between the Epistle and Gospel at High Mass. The short pieces which follow (*Christe eleison*, *Sanctus*, &c.) are evidently fragments of lost Masses.

\* Tudor Church Music. Vol. III. (Published for the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust by the Oxford University Press.)



4. Several Responsories for Matins and Compline. It is well known that Matins, now for the most part only privately recited by the Clergy, were in England publicly sung in all the more important Churches. Of "*Dum transisset Sabbatum*" for Easter Sunday we have here three settings. Many others by early English composers have come down to us, of which the finest is probably the splendid one published by Tallis in 1575. "*Gloria in excelsis*," for Christmas Day, is part of "*Hodie nobis caelorum Rex*." The portion here set to music was sung with special solemnity in England. In the Sarum Breviary it is directed to be sung by five boys (apparently representing the Angels of the Nativity) in a conspicuous position behind the high altar, wearing surplices, their heads covered with white amices, and carrying lighted candles. The present setting is a beautiful little piece for Trebles and Altos. Of this, too, several settings are preserved in Add. MSS. 17802-5, at the British Museum. "*Audivi media nocte*" is another short piece, for All Saints' Day. "*In pace*" (p. 48) belongs to the Office of Compline, which in the old English Uses varied considerably according to the different seasons. In the present Roman Rite it remains almost unchanged throughout the year, and the present Responsory does not occur. All these pieces are founded on the proper Plainchant melodies, which occur in long notes more or less persistently throughout.

5. The short pieces for three voices (p. 123 *seq.*) are probably all portions of longer works. Here the editors have perhaps spread their net rather too wide, some of them being of doubtful authenticity. "*Rex amabilis*" (p. 125) is certainly not by Taverner. It is an extract from Fayrfax's "*Maria plena virtute*," which occurs at the Bodleian Library and elsewhere. "*Esto nobis*," again (p. 133), is attributed to Tallis in at least one MS. at Tenbury. We suspect that it is part of that composer's "*Ave Dei Patris*," of which we have not yet succeeded in discovering a complete copy. In the case of "*O splendor gloriae*" (p. 99), attributed in Ch. Ch. 979-88 to Taverner and Tye, the editors "make no attempt to distinguish the work of each" (p. xix.). The three-part section, "*Et cum pro nobis*" (p. 108), however, is attributed to Tye in Baldwin's MS. (Buck. Palace Library), and we may probably assume that from this point to the end the work is his. Tye's work is, in general, distinguished by a much greater feeling for melody in the modern sense, which we think we recognise here. Even the harmony is more modern in feeling, as at "*pro nobis miseris peccatoribus*" (pp. 105, 106). The repetition of the words, too, at "*te prece precamur*" (p. 108) is much more suggestive of Tye than of Taverner.

We are glad that the editors have printed the four incomplete motets from the Peterhouse MSS. (pp. 134-141). Though two of

the voice-parts are missing, these may quite possibly turn up somewhere, and will be the more easily identified. Very interesting and significant is the piece headed "*Quemadmodum*" (p. 117), which foreshadows the definitely fugal treatment of Psalms and other liturgical texts, without the help of a Plainchant *canto fermo*, by composers of the next generation. Though the words are unfortunately wanting, there can be no doubt that the piece is a setting of the first two verses of (Vulgate) Ps. 41; and an examination of the motives enables us to trace, though naturally less clearly and definitely than in later examples, the allocation of the text as follows: "*Quemadmodum | desiderat cervus | ad fontes aquarum: | ita desiderat | anima mea | ad te, Deus.*" And so with the second part: "*Sitivit | anima mea | ad Deum fortem vivum: | quando veniam | et apparebo | ante faciem Dei?*"

6. Musically, however, the most important compositions in the volume are the long, extra-liturgical motets known as Anthems—"Ave Dei Patris filia," "Gaude plurimum," "O splendor glorie," and (on a smaller scale) "Sospitati dedit aegros," "Mater Christi sanctissima." These represent a form of composition which appears to have been peculiar to this country, and they were probably sung at an informal devotional service which perhaps took the place of the modern rite of Benediction. In these the usual Plainchant *canto fermo* was frequently dispensed with, though "Ave Dei Patris" has a Tenor in long notes, which looks like an ecclesiastical melody. In scale they may almost be described as Cantatas, consisting often of half-a-dozen movements or more, for different groups of voices, these being sometimes dovetailed into one another, or at other times quite detached. The words were sometimes well-known Hymns or Sequences, mostly in honour of our Lady, such as "Gaude flore virginali," "Stabat Mater dolorosa," "Salve Regina" (a different version from that now in use), or such as the quaint Prose in honour of St. Nicholas—"Sospitati dedit aegros"—included in this volume. At other times the words have the appearance of having been written for the occasion, and are sometimes poor and conventional, expressed in dog-Latin which is not always even intelligible.

This is by no means the case, however, with those printed in this volume. "Ave Dei Patris filia" consists of eight stanzas of semi-rhythmical rhymed prose, every division ending with a short *a*. Though it has not been traced to any known liturgical source, it was set to music by many English composers. The earliest setting that we can remember is an anonymous composition in the famous Lambeth Choir-book, and there are others by Fayrfax, Merbecke, Tallis and Robert Johnson. "Gaude plurimum" and "O splendor glorie" are both examples

of little prose poems which appear to have been put together for the sake of the music, possibly even by the composer himself. But however this may be, the author, whoever he is, expresses himself with real if rude eloquence; and as he warms with his subject he employs a diction which is stately and dignified, and even at times splendid. Take this for example: "Gaude, sacratissima Virgo, illum . . . immortalem filium peperisse, qui caelica sua potestate inferni debellavit tyrannidem, cruentas mortis aeterni principis vires fregit, vitamque humano generi perpetuam restituit." Or this: "Mortem intulerat protoplasti inobedientia: sed quo facturæ tuæ vitam redimeres, de Maria Virgine humillima, Jesu, sumpsisti carnem." The editors, we may observe, have preserved the mediæval spelling of the MSS., but it will probably be more convenient to ordinary readers if we adopt the usual orthography.

It is often a matter of some difficulty in these pieces to arrive at a satisfactory text, since the MSS. often differ as to details, and the scribes make just the same kind of mistakes with the words as they do with the music. The editors have not, indeed, noted all the variant readings, as they have in the case of the music; but nevertheless the same critical methods, both deductive and inductive, have to be applied in dealing with the former as with the latter. Let us say at once, however, that the words as printed here (pp. xxii. *seq.*) betray the revision of a first-rate classical scholar; and if the present writer ventures in a few instances to criticise the readings adopted, it is not because he has the slightest claim or pretension to speak as such, but because there are various factors to be taken into account beside good Latin, such as biblical and liturgical allusions, and particularly the treatment of the text by the composer himself; though on the other hand there is always the possibility that the composer himself may have misunderstood or corrupted the text.

We observe, then, that we do not agree with the editors' punctuation in the seventh stanza of "Ave Dei Patris filia" (p. xxii.) where they read "Ave Virgo feta ut sol," etc. A comma may seem a small thing, but it is sufficient, sometimes, to alter the sense. We think the correct reading is undoubtedly:

Ave Virgo feta,  
ut sol praelecta,  
mater intacta,  
sicut luna perpulchra.  
Salve parens inclita,  
enixa puerpera, &c.

Nor is it to the point to object (if so be) that grammatically the

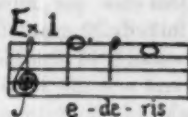
words *feta ut sol* ought to be joined together, since this is clearly not the author's meaning. Mediæval Latin must be taken for what it is, and not for what it is not. The poet is here quoting a well-known passage from the Book of Canticles (vi. 9)—“*Quae est ista quae progreditur quasi aurora consurgens, pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol,*” &c. And so, if we turn to the music on p. 69, we find that the composer has set a rest after *feta* in all the parts, while *ut sol* is joined to *praelecta*. We have already mentioned that there are several other English settings of these words. Of these, the only one at hand at the moment is that of Johnson, where the words are treated in exactly the same way: and we should be very much surprised to learn that any of the others gave support to the editors' reading. To understand *feta*, we must turn to another passage of Scripture, to that remarkable vision of St. John recorded in Apoc. xii., which forms, as it were, the second act of the primeval drama inaugurated in the Garden of Eden, and described in the third chapter of Genesis, as Cardinal Newman has explained in his “Letter to Dr. Pusey.” The passage reads thus: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailling in birth, and in pain to be delivered.” There can be no doubt that *Ave Virgo feta* alludes to this passage. In the same way, at *Salve parens inclita*, the writer is quoting the well-known lines of Sedulius beginning “*Salve sancta Parens, enixa puerpera Regem,*” which occur as the Introit to the Mass on many feasts of the Blessed Virgin.

Turning now to “*Gaude plurimum*” on the following page (xxxiii.), we dislike the reading *gravida edideris enizum*, in verse 2. We believe we are right in saying that only one MS. gives *enizum*, all the others reading *enixa*;<sup>\*</sup> and we may fairly ask whether there is any authority in mediæval Latin for the use of this participle in a passive sense—“a child brought forth.” At any rate, it is constantly used in an active sense, as in the line of Sedulius quoted above. We think that the correct reading is undoubtedly *enixa*, which should be taken with *materno foveres* [*sic*] *gremio*—“when thou hadst brought forth the immortal child, thou didst tend him on thy bosom”—the comma coming after *edideris*. Here, again, the music bears us out: there is a rest after *ederis* [*sic*] (p. 80), and *enixa* is joined to the following clause.

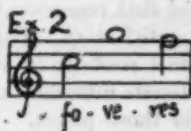
Then as to the verbs in this sentence—the editors read *qesseris, edideris, foveris*. This is no doubt good Latin, but the difficulty is

<sup>\*</sup> To verify this and similar statements would require a visit to several libraries at different points of the compass: we believe, however, that they will be found to be substantially accurate.

that it does not fit the music. There are only three notes corresponding to *edideris*, and the composer has written *foveres* (long e), not *foveris* (e short): and though, following the practice of Plainchant, 16th century musicians frequently write a number of notes to a short syllable, in this case the composer has left no doubt as to his meaning. He has written *ederis* [*sic*] thus:



but *foveres* thus:



and that in all the parts. Moreover, besides *gesseris*, the MSS. give *gereris*, and even *generis*, which are, of course, impossible. Under the circumstances, since *foveres* cannot be avoided, and *ederis* is inadmissible, the best suggestion we can make is to read *gereres*, *ederes*, *foveres*. The imperfect tense is probably not good Latin: but if we can suppose that the author of the words (or the composer) was capable of writing *ederis* for *edideris*, we need not assume that he would be careful to preserve a classical sequence of tenses. And it is surely better to sing *ederes* (bring forth) than *ederis*, which means "eat."

In the third verse we should prefer *peperiase* (*te* being understood) to *peperisti*, corresponding to *genuisse* in the following verse; and, in fact, the editors have so printed it on pp. 81 and 82.

At the end of "Mater Christi" (p. xxiv.) we should prefer *vincere*, where the editors, following most of the MSS., read "et nos pie fac *vincere*."\* They have probably assumed that the writer was quoting

\* Though *vincere* is, we believe, only found in one MS. (Bodl. c. 1—5), this MS. is a weighty one. We long ago formed the conclusion that Mr. John Sadler (the scribe) was a very capable person.



St. Paul (Titus ii. 12), "Erudiens nos ut . . . sobrie et juste et pie vivamus in hoc saeculo." We think it more probable, however, taken in connection with *vescamur*, and especially with what goes before—"salutari potu et cibo paviati nostra corpora"—that the allusion is to Apoc. ii. 7, "Vincenti dabo edere"—"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." And, again, verse 17 reads "Vincenti dabo manna absconditum." In this case *pie* must, of course, be taken with the subject of *fac*—"mercifully grant that we may overcome"—a use which is common enough in liturgical prayers. Lastly, we would suggest that the ugly and uncouth form *ambrosio* seems scarcely worth preserving for the sake of the supposed intentional rhyme in the last two lines. At least one MS. gives the usual form *ambrosia*.

Turning now to the music, it is to be noted that in contrast to the Masses contained in the first volume, many of the more important works included here (*e.g.*, the Anthems described above) are found in many different MSS., and that consequently the resulting musical text is, on the whole, very satisfactory. That is not to say that we should adopt the editors' exact readings in every case; in matters of detail there is room for legitimate difference of opinion. But we have noticed no serious errors in these pieces.\* Nevertheless, when we come to those pieces for which there is only one MS. authority, we find a few passages which are sufficiently startling. This is especially the case with regard to our old friend Add. 17802-5 at the British Museum. It seems ungrateful to speak harshly of the dear old Scribe to whom we are indebted for the preservation of nearly all the four-part Latin Church Music which has come down to us covering a period of more than fifty years. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that he was but a poor musician. The editors know, for instance, though the majority of their readers do not, what the "Western Wynde" Mass would look like, if printed literally from this MS. Let it be clearly understood that they have given us a faithful transcription of this, as of other MSS. But unfortunately something more than this is required if we are to arrive at what the composer really wrote, which, after all, is the only thing that matters. For this purpose it is necessary to appraise and discriminate between the values of the different MS. authorities. We have no doubt that the editors have done this in their own minds, but we could wish that they had offered more guidance to the many who will use these volumes, and who will not all be experts. At times, indeed, they have corrected the MSS. with insight and circumspection; but in other cases they have

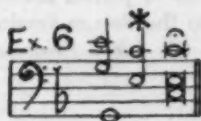
\* On page 99, bar 8, the last note in the Treble should, of course, be G, not F; but this is probably a printer's error.



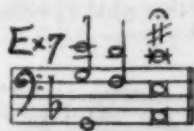


We have indicated the identity by a star, and the imitation of the sequence-phrase by a bracket. We may add that the Missa " Brevis " appeared in 1570, long after Taverner's death. There is not, however, the slightest reason to suppose that Palestrina had ever seen a note of Taverner's music, or indeed had heard of his existence.

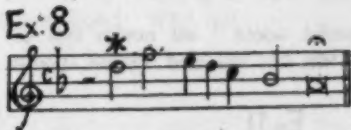
Another evidently corrupt passage occurs at bars 2 and 3 of the same page, at *qui potens est*, where the editors have changed the last note in the bass from A to C. It will be noticed, however, that the first half of every other verse ends with a chord of A, as at *meus* (p. 3), *suo* (p. 5), etc. It seems more probable therefore, that the mistake is in the upper parts. The anticipated C in the Tenor part,



making a 4th to the Bass G, is not only weak in itself, but is opposed to sixteenth century theory and practice. There is more than one possible reading, but perhaps the most probable would be this :



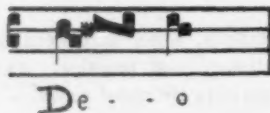
In the last bar of page 7 there appears to be a minim wanting in the 1st Tenor part (D or A), judging from the model in the 2nd Tenor.



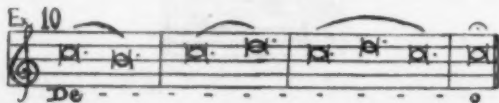
Let us now turn to the " Gloria in Excelsis " from the same MS.,

and examine the 2nd Treble part in the penultimate bar of page 46. Here we notice that the second dotted breve C forms no part of the harmony: it looks like a suspended 7th, which is abruptly turned into a 4th, and back to a 7th again, and finally becomes a concord without any resolution of the discords. All this is quite opposed to sixteenth century conceptions. We shall be told, perhaps, that the passage is an example of Taverner's originality—that the C is a sort of inverted pedal—an anticipation of the famous passage in the slow movement of Beethoven's 5th Symphony. We fancy, however, that the true explanation is a much simpler and more prosaic one. There is merely a note missing in the MS.: the second breve should be D, not C at all. And this is easily proved. The second Treble part has the Plainchant melody, set in perfect breves. We have not had the opportunity of turning up the Sarum version, but we have before us the Solesmes edition of the *Liber Responsorialis* (p. 57, ed. 1895) which reads thus:

## Ex. 9



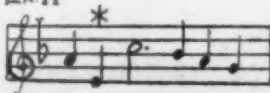
and there can be no doubt that what Taverner wrote was this:



N.B.—Since the above was written, we have examined the printed Sarum Antiphonale at the British Museum (Paris 1519, Tomus I, fo. lii, v). The version there given is not absolutely identical with that of Solesmes printed above; but the last syllable of *Deo* is set to a *torculus* C D C. Ex. 10 is therefore quite correct, except that the last syllable of *Deo* should come on the fifth note, and the last two C's should be tied.

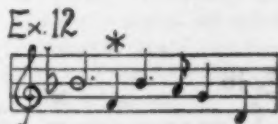
In "Audivi media nocte" we notice two or three mistakes on page 36. In the 9th bar the 2nd Treble should undoubtedly read:

## Ex. 11

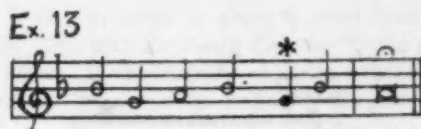




in the 11th bar the first G should be F :

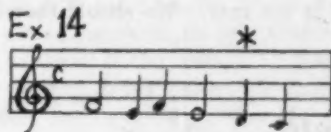


and, finally, in the 15th bar the Alto should probably read :

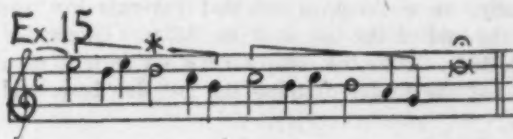


Of these, the first and third are mistakes in the MS.; the second is apparently a printer's error.

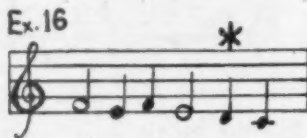
Passing on to the "Le Roy" Kyrie, the last four bars of p. 55 are well worth careful examination. Here we find a pair of ugly fifths in the penultimate bar between Tenor and Bass. Did Taverner write them? If so, he would appear to have gone out of his way to do so. The model of the figure appears first in the Tenor



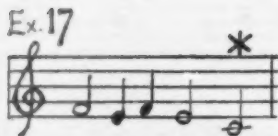
and this is imitated consistently in the other parts. Why should he later on alter and spoil it by skipping a third, merely to write consecutive fifths with the Bass? Why not



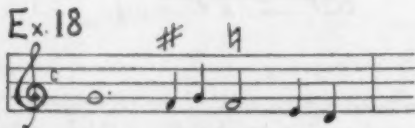
Is not this in itself better counterpoint? But this is not all. In the Alto part of the preceding bar, Taverner does sacrifice a fragment of his figure to avoid fifths with the Bass. Instead of writing



he writes



and we may be duly thankful to the scribe for allowing this to stand. There is, however, another difficulty: there are also (apparently) fifths between Alto and Tenor in the 4th bar from the end. These, however, are easily accounted for. It was commonly understood that an F between two G's might always be sharpened, provided the harmony allowed of it; and here we have also the analogy of the semitone C B in the bass. We should therefore read the Tenor part thus:



so preserving the figure intact without transgressing the letter of the law. Lastly, we would point out that Taverner has used the same figure at the end of the *Gloria* of the Mass "*Gloria tibi Trinitas*" (Vol. 1, p. 135). Here the composer has six parts to manage instead of four. Let the reader examine the last five bars, and find fifths if he can.

Since we have mentioned this Mass, we may point out that there is another pair of quite gratuitous fifths on page 128, bars 9 and 10, between Treble and 1st Tenor. Evidently the first note of the latter should be E, not F. In every one of the other parts the melody rises a third: and though Taverner would not have hesitated to alter the first note if the harmony had required it, here the harmony not only does not require it, but will not bear it. The entry on a 6-4 chord is not only weak in itself, but is quite opposed to sixteenth century principles. We have not verified the passage, and the F may possibly be a printer's error. Let us hope so.

Returning to Vol. II. on p. 37, bar 9, the editors have altered a note in the Treble part which has the authority (apparently) of two independent MSS., in order to avoid a quite harmless momentary clash with the Alto, with the result that the Treble moves in octaves with the 1st Bass. It almost looks as if the editors were determined that the composer should write forbidden progressions whether he would or no!

This question of Taverner's alleged use of consecutive fifths and octaves seems worth a little further investigation. In the introductory Appreciation prefixed to this volume, the editors allude to Morley's oft-quoted words as to the attitude of English composers (Taverner being named among them) to these progressions. It may not be inapposite to continue the quotation. Morley proceeds thus: "but if you chance to finde any such thing in their workes, you may be bolde to impute it to the oversight of the copyers: for, copies passing from hand to hand, a small oversight committed by the first writer, by the second will be made worse, which will give occasion to the third to alter much both in the words and notes, according as shall seeme best to his owne judgement, though (God knowes) it will be farre enough from the meaning of the Author." Notwithstanding all this, the editors seem to have firmly persuaded themselves that Taverner was a "law-breaker"—"a classic with the laurel-wreath slightly misfitted"—on no better grounds, as far as we can see, than those against which Morley has expressly warned them as untrustworthy. We cannot help thinking that what was at the back of their minds was this: that since, in an age of religious upheaval, Taverner (among others) was led astray by strange doctrines imported from the Continent, therefore he was likely to be infected by musical anti-nomianism. However, bethinking themselves in time of their logic, they write "We can guess from his music if he were the man to hold any rules of musical decorum in much greater esteem, if it suited his will to break them" (p. xi.). Well, as far as we are able to judge of his music, we see plenty of evidence of a strong and forceful personality, and of an original genius, but none whatever that he was in any sense a revolutionary, or that he did not find

the musical speech of his day quite elastic enough to allow him to express his ideas without transgressing recognised grammatical rules. As for the consecutive fifths, octaves and unisons, the unresolved discords and other musical solecisms which occur not illiberally in these volumes, it is our firm conviction that at least nine-tenths were never written by Taverner at all. And of the remaining tenth we are frankly sceptical. In almost every case in which there are sufficient data on which to form a reasonable conclusion, we have seen these faulty progressions melt away like snow in sunshine. We quite agree that all this is, in a sense, the "least significant of Taverner's merits." No one in his senses, of course, would maintain that the mere avoidance of consecutive fifths would make him a great composer or even a composer at all. But it is nevertheless the fact that all the great musicians of the sixteenth century did carefully avoid these progressions. We may go further, and say that they were avoided in all but rare and exceptional cases by all the great Masters, right up to the end of the nineteenth century. They were even considered objectionable within the memory of many still living. We have changed all that, of course.

*Ἡμεῖς τοι πατέρον μέγ' ἀμείνονες εὐχόμεθα εἶναι.*

But the question we have to consider here, is not what is thought of them now, but what Taverner thought of them, and especially whether as a matter of fact he wrote them in this case or in that. Modern ideas on the subject, however enlightened, will hardly, we believe, be found applicable to sixteenth century composition.

In dealing thus with points of textual criticism, we have left ourselves no space for any consideration of Taverner's work as a whole, nor for comparing it with that of his predecessors and successors. To this subject we may possibly return on a future occasion. Meanwhile we shall look forward with keen anticipation, and without undue apprehension, to the succeeding volumes of this series. With the English Church music of Byrd and Gibbons we have no special or detailed acquaintance, but we have no reason to doubt that the editors have dealt with this with complete efficiency. We have already pointed out the special difficulties presented by the text of Taverner, owing to the corrupt state of many of the MSS., and their comparatively late date. Even here, if the editors have given us a few bad readings, they have given us many good ones. In the case of later writers, such as Tallis and White, the MSS. are mostly larger in number; in the case of earlier ones, such as Fayrfax and Ludford, they are better in quality: in both cases they are for the most part contemporary in point of date. The editors will doubtless bear in mind that these volumes will be studied abroad as well as in this country, and that

sooner or later the text will probably be subjected to a much more minute and searching examination than we have been able to attempt in these pages.

We cannot conclude without voicing the gratitude which must be felt by all students and lovers of our national music to the Carnegie Trustees for the financial aid which has at length enabled this fine old music to become generally accessible.

H. B. COLLINS.

P.S.—The writer desires to express his regret that in his previous article (*MUSIC AND LETTERS*, Oct., 1924) he carelessly, but quite unintentionally misquoted the editors in two instances. In Vol. 1, p. xxiv., they write "one of the world's great composers," not "one of the world's greatest composers." On page 327, the article reads: "The editors tell us that the MS. gives seven breve rests in the treble part. This is not correct," etc. The editors' note (Vol. 1, p. 31), though not very clearly expressed, evidently implies that there are neither notes nor rests in the MS. The writer adheres, of course, to his opinion that notes are wanting, not rests. He makes this acknowledgment the more willingly since he has received no complaints on the subject.

NOTE.—The musical examples in this article are copyright (except Ex. 3).



## A COMPLAINT OF THE DECAY OF VIOLIN SOLOS

CHARLES LAMB once wrote a Complaint of the Decay of Beggars. It was full of charm and completely unfounded. For a Complaint of the Decay of Violin Solos there is only too much reason; while as for charm, it is a thing not to be commanded, but comes and goes like the wind on a wheat field. I could wish it mine.

Lamb's success may be seen in our streets any day at any time. Cornet, clarinet, zither, cigar-box, raise their dismal crying and demand our alms. But a search through our concert rooms for new violin solos reveals a situation resembling one in that witty book "The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rügen." August, the coachman has left the "gracious lady" and her maid behind upon the road—he has driven for miles without noticing they are no longer in the carriage. At last he stops. "What did I see then?" (he says) "What I then saw I shall never forget—no, never forget—no, not if my life should be continued to a hundred." He put his hand to his heart and gasped. The crowd waited breathless. "I turned round," continued August, "and I saw nothing."

Violin solos, too, have been left behind upon the road.

This, of course, is a slight exaggeration. But modern painters know well the value of over-stress and elimination in conveying sudden flashes of truth, and writers and musicians may profitably imitate their methods. It is nearer the truth about violin solos to say "Nothing" than to compile a short list of exceptions and a long catalogue of nonentities to prove the rule. Readers may well be left to guess these for themselves.

Having stated the existence of the void, the next step must be to define it.

The void is not in violin playing. Fine violinists are numerous and the standard of technical attainment is higher than ever before. Nor is it in publication, for dozens of new violin solos are printed every year; nor even in output, for most composers have turned their hands to a violin solo at some time or another, and many violinists have written for their favourite instrument. No, the void is in the absence of modern works fulfilling the requirements of a good solo. These requirements may roughly be summed up as follows:—(1) the solo should be interesting on its own merits as music; (2) it should

be intimately associated with the instrument for which it is designed, the technique and texture displaying the good qualities and concealing the limitations of the instrument.

A number of composers to-day put forward violin works which can—up to a point—pass the first test, and a certain number of violinists with a facility for composition provide works that stand the second, but of really fine original solos fulfilling both requirements the supply is very small.

This being so, it is not at all surprising that violinists have resorted to a system of transcriptions. All true artists prefer playing good stuff to "fluff," and most players would rather put the names of Beethoven and Mozart on their programmes than those of Bazzini and Zarzycki. Thus they take pieces that are intrinsically good and attractive and shape them into a sort of suitability. Then "high-brow" folk blame them for doing so! Yet I do not remember ever to have heard anyone rebuke Busoni's theft of Bach's "Chaconne"—the violinist's ewe-lamb—though it makes such a bad piano solo that one might think mere *amour-propre* would lead pianists to avoid it. The truth is violinists are handicapped far more hardly than people imagine when they plan recital programmes. They must either rely upon classics and "fluff" if they desire to have their executive abilities appreciated, or they must sacrifice themselves and their instrument if they champion modern music.

This second course is doubtless noble and altruistic, but are composers justified in expecting soloists to adopt it? One thing is sure: composers and critics are not justified in grumbling at violinists for following familiar lines in their programmes. We all know the typical programme. It begins with Vitali's "Chaconne," or Corelli's "La Folia," continues with a classical concerto or sonata (or both), and ends with a group of Kreisler's charming arrangements. All these works are good as music and good for the violin. Practically all were written by composers who could play the violin.

Nowadays most composers play the piano; a few play the violin, and some do not play any instrument at all. Yet do composers and critics, when dismissing a violinist's programme (with the "slightly disdainful air of those to whom the gods have been kind") pause to consider how very kind the gods have been to pianists? Two whole composers to themselves (Chopin and Scriabine), libraries of first-rate keyboard works to draw upon from Byrd and Bach to Ravel and De Falla, with riches of the past, present, and (one can safely predict) future. Violinists are rich in the past only. There alone they have a literature of gold to draw upon, inherited from the time when violin players and violin music were in the front of thinking.

Two hundred years ago the violin was acknowledged as the most

romantic thing in music. No other instrument could approach it in beauty of tone and perfection of means (unless it were the violoncello) and keyboard players had nothing that could compare with it in expressive power. The clavichord, harpsichord and organ were weak, insensitive, clumsy by comparison. As Parry pointed out in his *Art of Music*, the great Italian violin makers of the seventeenth century put into the hands of performers "the most ideally perfect instrument for expression that human ingenuity seems capable of devising." It came at a time when composers had embarked on a quest for independent instrumental form in music, and its system of tuning and untrammelled truth of intonation made the violin a singularly helpful and sympathetic pioneer when keyed instruments were still weltering in the difficulties that ended in the compromise of equal temperament. Moreover the violin, from its nature, was closely allied to the harmonic scheme of music then being developed—a scheme based upon the chords derived from the lower, wider intervals in the harmonic series of overtones, and one which served composers from the time of Corelli right on to Brahms.

The Italian composer-violinists were wonderful fellows. Corelli, the father of violin playing; Vivaldi, the model of Bach; Tartini, with his Leonardo da Vinci intellect; Veracini, the virtuoso; Locatelli, the long-handed super-virtuoso; Nardini, the matchless exponent of cantabile, and all the others of that splendid company.

When they began they found instrumental music without an intelligible form, and the violin without a suitable technique. When they finished they had made both, and the tale is one of the most fascinating in music. They were Italians, they were ardent. Faced with great necessities, they took them as great opportunities. Parry says: "Possessed with the passion to attain some ideal joy that their instrument seemed to promise in possibility, (they) soon brought their department of art to almost the highest pitch of perfection." That alone was a great thing; it was but half their achievement. As he goes on to say: "To them more than to any others, the credit of establishing the principles of harmonic form on a firm basis for instrumental music is due. The speed with which they advanced towards an intelligent grasp of the principles necessary for such a purpose of design is very surprising. It was probably due to the fact that they all were performers on a solo instrument. The central idea in the violin soloist's mind was to make his effect by melody, with subordinate accompaniment; that is, melody as only the upper part of a set of equal independent parts. . . . The violin is naturally a single-part instrument—a singing instrument with great capacities for enlivening and adorning its cantabile with brilliant passages."

Successful solo writing was perhaps made easier for the composer-

violinists of that day than it is for us because the limits imposed by the nature of harpsichord-tone prevented too great density in the accompaniments. The harpsichord is a singularly attractive instrument for the purpose. The evanescent quality of its fundamental notes and the iridescent play of its overtones give point without ponderousness to the harmonic texture, and make an admirable background for the continuous tone of the violin. The modern pianoforte, with its *semi-sostenuto*, is far harder to manipulate successfully.

That these solos by the great Italian, French and German violinists still hold the field is due to their entire fitness for their purpose. They have the duality of merit that bestows long life, i.e., excellence as abstract music and excellence as concrete solo music. They are still the foundation of the classical violin school.

It was perhaps inevitable that the early glow of enthusiasm for the violin should wane as keyboard instruments improved and drew towards them, by their capacity for harmony, the finest composer-intellects of the time. Bach, Handel, Mozart and Beethoven were all primarily keyboard men. But they took a liberal view of their responsibilities and played the violin capably. Haydn, too, was rather a good player. Not one of them dabbled; all thoroughly understood the instrument from personal experience. Mozart could perform a concerto when necessary. Beethoven could take a hand in a quartet. Mendelssohn, a generation later, could enchant people by his performances even on a poor fiddle. When they wrote for the violin they did so from an intimate knowledge of its nature, just as Bach and Handel had done in their time. Brahms, not himself an expert violinist, took Joachim's advice over his concerto with happy results; it is said that Mendelssohn consulted F. David over his. No one demurs at placing the violin concertos by these masters among their most important works. Beethoven's certainly ranks as one of his best symphonic things. Mendelssohn's will probably live longer than any of his symphonies, and the Brahms concerto, judged as music, is more noble than either of the Brahms piano concertos. Yet even their great value as abstract music could not keep them alive unless they were eminently suitable for the instrument they are designed to display. It is one of their glories that their beauties rise from the true characteristics of the violin.

Bach's concerto in A minor is the one exception. Passages occur in it which suggest the harpsichord far more strongly than the violin, and they nearly always sound rough however good the player. On the other hand, in justice to Bach one ought to remember that when he was born, differentiation of style between various instruments was also in its infancy, and the musical forms of sonata, concerto and solo were almost interchangeable. It is only in their

progress down the centuries that they have developed separate entities of their own. Something else also has developed during those centuries which has affected them very strongly. That thing is the pianoforte. It started as an attendant harpsichord or clavier. It has grown in being and swelled in tone till it is not only the favourite solo instrument, but threatens, like a Goliath of music, to reverse the Biblical event and to overwhelm poor little David the violin. The results from this increase are curious—as strange as the processes of coast erosion. While the pianoforte has succeeded in abolishing the old solo violin sonata (Sir Charles Stanford alone in modern times having written two)—the department of duo-sonatas (in which the violin and pianoforte supposedly divide the duties of the music equally between them) has increased to an extent beyond all proportion with the rest of violin literature.

Essentially, of course, it is impossible for the violin and pianoforte to act on equal terms. As has already been said, the violin is a melodic instrument singularly free from mechanical restrictions. At times this nearness to nature is almost embarrassing when the violin is used with the piano, for the violin plays in the pure scale, and the piano in the tempered. There are certain passages in chamber music where the violinist must deliberately deviate a little from true intonation to avoid clashing with the pianoforte. Their idioms are so distinct that thematic material suitable for both is a problem in itself. That it has been handled with sufficient success by many composers is shown by the number of fine sonatas "à deux" that exist, but the process of forcing two racially different instruments into one orbit becomes increasingly difficult. Pizzetti, with his true Italian instinct for the violin, has given indications of a new method. In his striking Sonata for violin and pianoforte he allows each of the instruments to revolve in an orbit of its own—linking the two orbits together by a slight overlapping of idea. The method is logical, lucid and strangely emotional in effect.

The Violin Concerto, partly because it has always belonged to the symphonic order in music and partly because it could not be affected by the piano, has followed a line more consistent, and more considerate for the violin, than that of the sonata. The Concerto has always been the biggest form of solo available. In writing it composers have taken a wide and serious view of their duties, and in their best concertos matter and manner are of equal importance. The violin concertos of Beethoven and Brahms have already been alluded to. Others, not absolutely in the first rank, still hold a vital place because they are rooted in the true style of violin and orchestra. The works of Spohr, Max Bruch, Tschaikowsky, Saint Saëns and Lalo come within this category, while several other concertos, slighter



in thought and more shallow in feeling, eke out a tenuous existence as virtuoso music. In the mere art of displaying the violin no one has surpassed Paganini and Ernst; consequently their works are occasionally played, though one groans at their vapidities and girds at their style, so *démodé* and dull.

Of concertos recently added to violin literature it is as well to speak cautiously. Prokofiev is not a composer to be gauged upon a slight acquaintance. But it may be admitted that a single hearing of his concerto leaves an impression that he has, for reasons of his own, exploited the unnatural effects of the violin with inhuman dexterity. In any case, his concerto must be unmercifully difficult to play, and average violinists will not feel wildly grateful for a work which involves so much grinding practice for so little personal reward. However, the concerto has striking points and is one of the most definite attempts yet made to do something for the violin in the new manner.

To turn from violin concertos to shorter works is to find the *real deficiency*. Decay has fallen upon violin solos with pianoforte accompaniment. Nowadays composers take little interest in this type of work. When they do write for the violin they usually put forward pieces that would do equally well for any instrument, or pieces in which the accompaniment is quite as important as the solo; in effect, a duo and not a solo.

Now compositions of the first sort are often attractive as to their material and sound sympathetic on the fiddle, but they give no real idea of what the instrument is capable, nor of what the player can do. Pieces of the second sort are a contradiction in terms. So far have things gone that to-day the idea is accepted as a matter of course that the accompaniment should be co-equal with the solo, even if not paramount in interest. But why, one asks, why?

Is a piece for two pianos a solo for one? Is a piece for string orchestra the same thing as a piece for full orchestra? Surely not. The question answers itself. There is a place for everything under the sun: and the piano has many places—(usually places "in the sun")—but in violin solos its rôle is *not* that of a reigning consort.

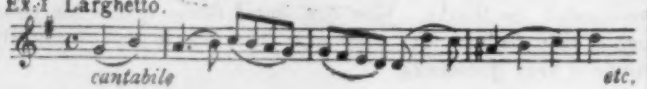
Violinists will have remarked at some time or another the singular (and may I add) gently egotistic attitude of the majority of pianists. So long as Goliath can disport himself in a sonata he is delighted to play with David. But if asked to accompany a solo his complaisance changes. He demands again an equal share of interest and importance—and an equal share of the limelight. If refused, he wraps himself in the mantle of a lofty musical morality. Display is vulgar, uneducated, he thinks. How can David desire to use his powers in such a silly foolish way, with such silly foolish music? Really this vanity is very distressing. . . .

In the name of commonsense, are solos, one asks, sinful in violinists, pious in pianists? If pianists possess the world's finest solo literature, should not their very wealth teach them generosity? And since many pianists are also composers might they not reflect that a remedy lies in their own hands for at least one of the ills they complain of? If existing violin solos shock them, why not write something good and brilliant instead? Violinists would welcome such solos with both hands, for they have no prejudice in favour of inferior as against superior music, and are quite ready to "love the highest" as soon as it is there to be seen!

Now I would wish it as far from me to presume upon the instruction of composers as the depths of the Pacific are distant from the peaks of Everest. Yet I would like to assure composers that if they will turn their attention to the violin in a kindly and philosophical spirit, they will find "David" is still a sweet singer and, like his namesake of old, is a good ally when properly understood. The remarks that follow upon his characteristics are only made in the hope they will persuade to further personal acquaintance.

Broadly speaking, all music for the violin must be either melodic or harmonic, but the melodic properties of the instrument so outweigh the harmonic that the violin is rightly classed as a melodic instrument and everyone subscribes to the statement. Yet in practice the fact is frequently ignored and the fiddle is treated as if its four strings were interchangeable. They are not. The violin has a *tessitura* of its own, exactly as the human voice has one, and it lies upon the middle strings D and A. For several reasons the old Italian composer-violinists poised their solos upon this centre. To-day conditions have changed. There is a tendency to push melodies (like other things) to extremes of compass. There is an inclination to stress the E and G, the highest and lowest strings, at the expense of the rest. Composers are right in believing the E and G to be beautiful and characteristic in tone. The fact they overlook is that neither height nor depth mean much without a centre to which they can be related. The violin is so little mechanical, is an instrument so close to Nature, that the best results are obtained when working in accordance with Nature. Beethoven had a marvellous instinct in these matters. The slow movement of his violin concerto would lose half its divine wonder and beauty if the following passages had been placed an octave higher.

Ex. I *Larghetto.*



This is beautiful in itself, and is made more beautiful by the subtle contrast of tone with the opening section of the movement upon the E string. Elgar, too, has used the mystical quality of the D string with great beauty in the second subject of the first movement of his violin concerto.

Ex: 2 Semplice



These examples are melodic in the strictest sense of the term—tunes with definitely balanced phrases. But the melodic element also governs passage work for the violin. Few people are aware how much the actual "line" of solo music affects them—the line that is as definitely there as the silhouette of mountains against the sky. The first movement of Brahms' violin concerto supplies a noble example of thematic line. Here the beauty of the principal subject is largely a matter of its outline, especially at that great place in the coda where the theme makes its final appearance.

Tranquillo.



In passage work the outline is, if anything, a matter of more vital moment than in melody because the emotional appeal of passage work

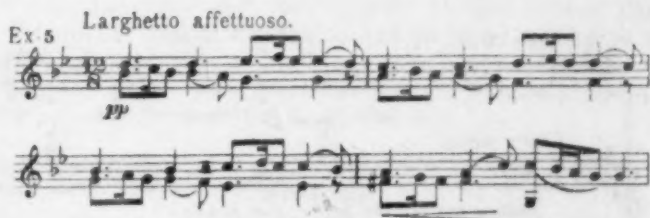
is less than that of melody, and mere technique exerts no real intellectual hold upon listeners. It is only when technical passages are relevant to the composition that they are thoroughly interesting. Many a composition that starts with good themes becomes prosy as it progresses through dull decorations, slackening its fibres into bravura passages that mean nothing in their context. Lack of violin technique and lack of vigorous invention are no doubt mainly responsible for these lapses but lack of outline is their almost invariable sign. The fault is serious. Flabby outlines, shapeless silhouettes do not impress an audience more favourably in music than in painting. Mendelssohn had a master hand in this matter of line. It is probable that the greatest charm of his violin concerto lies in its "lines," and almost any page of the score furnishes first-rate examples. He was wonderfully clever at contrasting curves with horizontal lines; so, too, at developing his passage work from thematic details. His outlines are as clear and firm as those of a good etcher. He also introduced the different varieties of bowing with admirable effect, though whether the credit for this belongs to him or to Ferdinand David it would be hard to say.

Among the multitude of excellent examples the concerto affords, the following few bars from the first movement give some of Mendelssohn's merits in a nutshell—the thematic bars followed by firm, shapely passages that become more interesting and extensive as they proceed; and the continuation (not quoted here) deserves study, if the full adroitness of the composer is to be seen.



So far only the matter of "line" has been touched on, and it is strongly important. But the harmonic implications that exist beneath "line" must not be forgotten. Nearly all melodies and passages are the crests, so to speak, of harmonic waves—waves in the tide of music that advances through a work from start to finish. These crests are essentially related to the harmonic element below and one

is the completion of the other. The melodies and passages of the Italian violinist-composers, of Handel, Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven and Brahms all take the wave forms of the harmonic element below them, a harmonic system which concerns itself mainly with the chords that correspond to the lower harmonics in the natural series of overtones. For several reasons the violin found this system peculiarly congenial. In Western Europe the violin has been tuned in fifths now for several hundred years, and its simple structure brings it close to nature. How intimately the instrument, its music, and practice are associated with acoustic facts may be judged from Tartini's discovery of the "third sound." His sensitively fine hearing detected the generating sound that proceeds from two notes vibrated together, and he made his pupils listen for it as a guide to perfect intonation in double stopping. "If you do not hear the bass, your thirds and sixths are not in tune," he said. The following passage, from the first movement of his famous "Trillo Del Diavolo" sonata affords a charming example of these thirds and sixths upon the violin. Tartini has disposed them so well for the instrument and so well for the hand of the player that they can hardly fail to sound beautiful; art and Nature are as one.



It is not desirable, however, that violin music should in future be spun out of the manners of the past. Music cannot go back to the style of Bach, Mozart and Brahms any more than architects of to-day can go back to the Pyramids, Beauvais and Babylon. Harmonic progress has been prodigiously rapid during the last twenty-five years and this harmonic expansion has even contributed indirectly to the decay of the violin solo. Modern music is greatly concerned with chords which draw their component parts from the upper notes of the harmonic series of overtones. These close, dissonant intervals are not allied to the open harmonious nature of the violin in the same easy way as the lower overtones in the series. Composers have evidently come up against this difficulty; few of them have faced it. To conquer it will be one of the surest ways of creating a new literature



for the violin. There is nothing inherently impossible in the process. Melodies and passages are implicit in every progression of chords: all that is necessary is that composers should find them. The violin is so flexible that it would probably respond admirably to music in the modern manner if it were written with knowledge of violin technique and sympathy for the instrument. Prokofiev, by deliberately exploiting the less genuine elements of violin tone in his concerto—the by-products as it were—has rather obscured the real issue. Vaughan-Williams, on the other hand, has seized with poet's instinct upon a natural feature of the instrument that had become almost meaningless from constant use—i.e., the clear sweetness and brilliance of the high notes on the E string—and he has transformed it into music instinct with poetic beauty. His solo for violin and orchestra called "The Lark Ascending," is one of the most significant things in modern violin literature. The violin solos of Szymanowski, Malipiero, Poldowski, Ravel and one or two others also show definite attempts to bring together the old instrument and the new idioms, and to work out a fresh technique. Szymanowski is particularly enterprising. His use of consecutive fifths for example is so ingenious and so quaintly defiant of ancient practice that it almost makes one smile. Take the beginning of his "Nocturne" for violin and piano, of which the first few bars are quoted below.

Ex: 6 Lento assai. (con sordino)

Lento assai. *pp*

*ppp dolciss.*  
*pesante ma sempre ppp e con pedale*

*ten* *pp*

Here the consecutive fifths are so cleverly disposed for the violin that they are almost bound to sound well, and their success is further ensured by the way in which the piano accompaniment is pushed off to either extreme of the keyboard, leaving the violin a clear space in which to disport itself. Very subtle this, because the violin is a pure scale instrument with fifths absolutely in tune, while the piano suffers from tempered fifths. A whole article might be written on the subject of piano accompaniments. It is no more possible to revert to the simple formulæ of the old Italian composers than it is to go back to their limited vocabulary of chords. But the fundamental relations between solo instrument and accompaniment remain unchanged. By forgetting the solo in the accompaniment more violin solos fail to-day than their composers suppose. The ideal relationship between the instruments is that the violin part should be interesting and intelligible without any accompaniment, that the piano part should be interesting without the violin solo, and that both together should make something much more interesting than either taken singly, provided of course that the violin always has the leading part. Ravel's "Tzigane" is remarkable in this respect. The violin solo is brilliant throughout, and with extraordinary skill Ravel has enhanced its beauty by subtly blending the tone effects with those of the piano. Evidently Ravel is not one of those composers who eschew violin technique as though it were an evil. He uses virtuoso effects with the greatest freedom and success, and gets them into his artistic scheme lucidly and surely. Some are very ingenious—notably the passages in various kinds of pizzicato. The slurred pizzicato in Example 7b is as unusual as it is effective:—



This free use of pizzicato in serious violin music is an interesting feature at the moment. A good example may be found in

the second movement of Herbert Howells' fine sonata in E minor for violin and piano, but as it occurs in a sonata, it lies somewhat outside the scope of this article. So, too, does the first appearance of jazz in serious music. Arthur Benjamin has used the rhythmic elements of jazz with charming effect in the finale of his *Sonatine* for violin and piano.

The truth is that there is nothing derogatory to music in technical brilliance and lilting rhythms in themselves—the fault is if composers use them poorly. Perhaps the most impressive proof of this can be found in the history of the cadenza. Instituted in the first instance as a means of free expression for the soloist, the cadenza came in time to be regarded mainly as a vehicle for technique. Many musicians scoffed at it, deriding the vanity of soloists, for it must be admitted the cadenza had sunk low. Then came Elgar, with his deeper insight, and in that marvellous cadenza, set near the end of the last movement in his violin concerto, he made a psychological revelation. It was a wonderful stroke of genius—a survey of the concerto akin to the noble verse of retrospect in Browning's poem on "Abt Vogler."

So far this paper has proceeded on the assumption that all violin music in the future will be written for the violin as we have it in Western Europe—i.e., tuned in fifths. It is not likely that any radical change will take place at present, and there are obviously still possibilities unexhausted if composers really wish to try them.

But once admit an altered tuning and all sorts of new vistas open up. The strangely delicate, philosophical and original compositions of Haig Gudenian have brought the very essence of Eastern thought into Western music. They fall like a moonray across the path. But they are only possible by reason of the altered tuning of his violin—a tuning usual in the East, exotic in the West. Instead of the familiar G, D, A, E, Gudenian uses E, B, F-sharp, B (two perfect fifths and a perfect fourth), the octave between the two B's seeming to alter the incidence of the overtones, while the fourth between the two upper strings gives an unfamiliar, almost uncanny, difference to the double stoppings. He, like Tartini, is an experimenter, and he, too, must be guided by an exceptionally sensitive sense of hearing since it is said he writes his accompaniments from the harmonies which he hears attached to his violin melodies. Their singular beauty of sound is enhanced by the manner in which Gudenian gives them an open space of score wherein to move, setting the piano parts at some distance, so that they may neither cloud nor clash with the solo.

Even altered tuning does not exhaust the possibilities for new developments. Atonality, and music written in quarter-tones are still in their infancy. Whether they will grow up is another matter!

## A COMPLAINT OF THE DECAY OF VIOLIN SOLOS 343

But in dealing with them composers will probably have more to gain from David the violin, than he has from them. The violin is one of the few instruments capable of the finest shades of intonation; and string players are normally trained to a more exact differentiation of these shades of difference than are other types of musicians. Violinists will have a great deal in their power . . . .

Everything considered, would it not be better to have David for a friend than a foe?

MARION M. SCOTT.

## OPERATIC EXPERIMENTS AT LANCING COLLEGE

WHEN I first came to Lancing I began to consider the possibility of boys performing operas. But at every turn I was confronted with difficulties, physical, social and material. For those who have never faced the problems of public school life, I will explain what those difficulties really are.

First, there is the physical difficulty, the difficulty of finding boys with uncracked soprano voices or with matured tenor or bass voices. Most public schools take boys at an age when their soprano voices have only a few months more of practical life, consequently there is no chance of their learning difficult rôles, even if it was desired. If it were not for the age limit rightly insisted upon by the public school authorities, there would be no difficulty in finding boy soloists for many soprano parts. Anyone who has had the experience of training boys between the ages of ten and twelve will testify to the inexplicable powers they display in learning the most difficult music. I have heard Allegri's *Miserere* sung at Worcester Cathedral by boys who, using the *abbellimenti*, soared up to top C, swelling from *pianissimo* to *forte*, and then descended slowly and softly to a long sustained G. I have heard a child at Hereford Cathedral sing the soprano solo from Brahms' *Requiem* with astonishing assurance. And, of course, many boys of this age sing the arias from the *St. Matthew Passion* in many churches and cathedrals throughout the country. But, as I have said, public schools take boys at an age when their voices are already tottering to their fall, so that they are as a rule too far gone to attack difficult parts, while the older boys, boys who have re-emerged as bass or tenor singers, have as a rule but a very small compass and none of the instinctive aptitude which they possessed as children.

The second difficulty—the difficulty of providing scenery, dresses and lighting, though slight, is real. It is not every school which has the means of providing suitable scenery and dresses, nor is every school equipped with a serviceable stage, dressing rooms and conveniences, necessary for an adequate presentation of an opera.

But it is the third difficulty, the social difficulty which presents the greatest problem to the producer. No one who has not experienced public school life can appreciate the immense gulf which



separates boys of different years. The blithe new-comer of fourteen is separated from the sixth form boy of sixteen by a social barrier as real as that which separates the manual labourer from the peer. To bring two such boys together, the one as principal soprano, the other as principal bass, is scholastically an undesirable and dangerous practice. Too much prominence given to a bright boy in the lower school, and in his early years at school, turns that angelic little boy into the similitude of something that hath horns and hoofs.

Such then were the difficulties I had to face, and so insuperable did they appear that I began to wonder if I might not have to give up the idea, just as Balaam's ass, another long suffering and perplexed animal, no doubt wondered if any progress were possible, flanked as he was by high walls and faced with a seraph with an irrevocable order "thus far and no farther."

Every opera I studied was either a tragedy (which in amateur performances generally rises to the heights of comedy or farce) and therefore unsuitable, or else it was a comedy with the whole interest centred in the love-affairs of the heroine and therefore equally unsuitable. In parenthesis, I must say that love-affairs, even if they are only farcical, are entirely unsuited to school performances, for which reason the Gilbert and Sullivan operas in spite of their sparkle and singability are not the solution of the present problem.

The conditions, then, under which the opera producer has to work are similar to the conditions imposed by the Red Queen on Alice in Wonderland, "Jam yesterday and jam to-morrow, but never jam to-day." However, having set my heart upon having jam, I was determined to get jam to-day, even if I had to make the jam myself. But how, and of what?

One or two truths were established in my mind. In the first place, I realised that my subject matter must be such that, if it had prominent feminine parts, it should not depend for its interest upon feminine love affairs, however farcical or unreal they might be. Secondly, I decided that the subject matter should be comic, not tragic. And thirdly, for convenience only, I decided that the period should be classical. As I pondered upon these three main principles I began to see clearly, between the lines, one or two other principles. One of these subsidiary principles was that comic dialogue, repartee and epigrams, lose all their point when sung, because wit is as swift as lightning, and music by comparison has, like the Army Service Corps, but two speeds—slow and stop. Again, dialogue (needful for the establishing of the situation) when sung is often ridiculous, and more important still, prevents the audience from gathering the dramatic points which are essential to the understanding of the plot. As a rule the significant words in the dialogue coincide with the

strong beats in the music which successfully obliterate the very words we wish to hear. Except when dialogue is skilfully treated, as by Verdi, what we hear runs as follows: "Disguised as — we will approach the house of — and seize the —, murdering —, etc." Even if this difficulty is overcome, there still remains the incongruity of an alliance between purely business matters and music. There is something wrong with a work of art when a man has to break a lyrical impulse to sing a question to his friend whether he drinks milk-punch, or whisky. It is desecration, to make music the handmaid of a barman or a house agent as Puccini does in *Madame Butterfly*. It is equally unfair to make music the handmaid of Lady Bracknell's reproof to John Worthing, "To lose one parent, Mr. Worthing, may be regarded as a misfortune, to lose both looks like carelessness." From these considerations I established, to my own satisfaction at any rate, the truth that music is too noble to consort with sordid subjects and too slow to run with wit.

As I had decided to limit myself to comedy and as I had decided that comedy must move swiftly, I saw only one way out of the impasse. I must find some story which had music and lots of music as an integral part of the plot, such as *The Mastersingers* or *The Magic Flute*, in which music is not a background, but the real action, and therefore at liberty to expand at the will of the composer. There is no doubt that, in spite of the theories of Wagner, of Debussy and others, opera exists only by its music, and that any so-called opera which reduces music to a background will fail to maintain its position as a practical opera. Therefore, I saw that it was essential to find a subject which had many moments when music could exist actively not passively, but only if music in such a plot was limited to its particular place in the plot. It is foolish to be logical in dealing with a work of art, yet it always seems rather absurd that in *The Mastersingers* Beckmesser should sing like an angel when he is talking, and sing like an idiot when he is singing. Or again, when every tune which Mozart writes for the flute is magic, why should he expect us to experience any further bewitchment at the tunes of *The Magic Flute*? For this reason, then, I decided that the music in an opera, which had music as a part of the action, should be limited to those particular portions of the plot when its presence was absolutely essential.

But, lest even this musical scheme should not give me enough scope for absolute music, I added to the score choral numbers by way of Overtures to the first and second acts. The choruses have nothing in common with the Greek Chorus which interrupts the action with foolish questions and idiotic comments; rather are they used as a personal comment upon the play as the choruses of Time, Irony

and Pity comment upon the situations in *The Dynasts* of Thomas Hardy. These numbers do not form part of the play and can be performed or omitted as desired, but they do give the audience a real splash of concerted and lengthily developed choral singing.

And now for a practical exposition of all this theorising. After many rejections, I chose for an early attempt the story of *Orpheus*. Doubtless the classically-minded will object that such a story cannot be considered as being free from love interest. But, as I planned the story, the redemption of Eurydice is the unexpected reward won by Orpheus after his conquest of the terrors of the realms of Pluto. The first scene takes place on the banks of the River Styx. Charon is sitting in great dejection; Hermes, the messenger of the gods, appears and says that he is bidden by Queen Persephone to escort Orpheus to the Court as she is anxious to hear him immediately and not to wait until the afternoon as previously arranged. Charon tells Hermes that this news but adds to his troubles, explaining that while rowing Orpheus across the ferry, he (Charon) was so enthralled by his singing that he forgot to steer, struck a rock and upset Orpheus into the stream. He further says that Orpheus insisted upon returning home to change his clothes and that he (Charon) fears that if his carelessness is known he will be turned out of his office by Pluto. Hermes offers to help Charon for a monetary consideration—a percentage of Ferry-dues and a bonus in the Sinking-fund. Charon accepts. Hermes, being a man of the world, believes that all is in a name and that any man called Orpheus sings as sweet, so he chooses a butcher, Sosthenes, with a powerful voice, and instructs him how to behave, particularly reminding him never to fall into speech but to sing everything in magnificent periods. They set out to buy a suitably artistic wig and a lute.

The second scene takes place in the royal Court of Hades. Queen Persephone and King Pluto (who shows little interest in the concert) are surrounded by their brilliantly clad, dull-witted Court. The three great critics of the lower world, Rhadamanthus, Aeacus, and Minos, are in attendance to give their opinions upon the world-famous artist.

Sosthenes, looking resplendent and artistic, is introduced by Hermes as Orpheus. Sosthenes gives Hermes many uneasy moments by forgetting to sing all his remarks and, making matters worse, by repeating them, after an admonitory glance from his mentor, in florid musical phrases. However, the Queen and the Court are delighted. The Queen asks for a French chanson and an Italian aria. Sosthenes, knowing neither French nor Italian, does his best with a few tags of these languages to the huge delight of his audience. In the middle of his Italian aria, the real Orpheus, properly dressed, enters. Rhadamanthus enquires the reason of his intrusion. He says that he

is Orpheus. Sosthenes, admonished by Hermes, sings more loudly and floridly that he is Orpheus. When this musical contest is at its height, Pluto awakes, and demands the cause of all the fuss. When the matter is explained he says, "I can't settle such a dispute, but I have heard that Orpheus can tame all things by his song. So be it; I will set upon you now the fury of the wild Eumenides.

"If you can stay their wrath, the happier you,  
If not, you earn the justice you deserve."

The Furies, accompanied by thunder, rush into the Court. Sosthenes flies, but Orpheus breaks into song in praise of his lost Eurydice.

Flowers are fair, but thou art fairer,  
And thy form more wrought with splendour.  
Set midst lilies, thou seemst rarer,  
Fashioned with a touch more tender.

The Furies sink to rest and all the Court sit spell-bound by his song. Pluto admits that Orpheus has indeed justified his claim and his reputation, and asks if there is anything he can do to make amends for the treatment he has received at his hands. Orpheus replies, "My young wife Eurydice was torn from me by heartless Atropos. If I have found some favour in your sight, I pray you let her be restored to me." Pluto grants the request and Orpheus sings an ode in praise of Music which has won back Eurydice from the grave; and this ode is taken up by the crowd and worked up into an imposing Finale.

An entirely different style of opera I built upon the Story of Aeneas' departure from Carthage. Here again, though Dido appears as a heroine, she appears in her political capacity not as the frenzied victim of love. Aeneas is anxious to get away to found Rome; he is sick of Carthage. He plans with his confidant, Balbus, who no doubt, subsequently, *murum aedificavit*, to summon an assembly in the Temple of Bel to discover the will of the Gods, secretly intending to place Balbus inside the huge effigy of Bel to utter the oracular command that Aeneas must leave for Rome. The reason Aeneas plans to counterfeit the oracle is that if he simply told Dido he wanted to go, she would refuse to let him take her best ships and as he has been building up the fleet for his own private ends her refusal would be decidedly inconvenient. Meeting Dido, he explains his plan, to which she, being simple-hearted and devout, willingly agrees. Later she meets the local Chancellor of the

Exchequer, Shalmanezzer, the son of Azariah, the son of Wataliah, to whom she communicates Aeneas' plan for a solemn assembly. Shalmanezzer at first hesitates, but later cordially agrees to the proposal for, as he explained to his slave after Dido has left him, he knows how the oracle is worked and he proposes to turn the assembly to his own purpose, by making his slave make an oracular pronouncement to the effect that Shalmanezzer must be handsomely pensioned off. The second act takes place inside the Temple of Bel, the huge effigy of whom faces the audience. The two slaves of Aeneas and Shalmanezzer appear simultaneously in the Temple carrying paper and megaphones. Each tries to persuade the other that he is a verger. That failing, each tries to get rid of the other by various acts of subterfuge. At length they come to blows, and in the midst of their fight, Bel himself, in the company of the High-Priest, visits his own temple. He soon discovers the purport of the oracular message written on the two papers, and perceives that Aeneas and Shalmanezzer are both trying to turn his power to their account. He enters the effigy and bids the High-Priest carry on the service. The crowds begin to assemble. The two parties of rival politicians enter chanting their masters' praises in simultaneous contrapuntal lines. The Queen enters to the strains of the Carthaginian National Anthem. Then the priestesses, veiled, pass singing through the temple and disappear behind the effigy. Priests then begin to invoke Bel in a solemn procession, being answered antiphonally by the priestesses who are now hidden and far distant. Finally the High-Priest arrives and invokes the counsel of Bel. Aeneas and Shalmanezzer are sitting on either side of the shrine ready to prompt their slaves (each of course unknown to the other). There is a low peal of thunder and a voice from the shrine begins, "Woe is Aeneas; he must leave Queen Dido's friendly shores, but using his old boats and rotten oars." Shalmanezzer looks bewildered; Aeneas rises with a sickly grin and says, "Your Majesty, 'tis but a joke"—when the High-Priest bids him sit down. The voice then continues, "Woe to Shalmanezzer; he must go, but not until he has repaid in full the money he has stolen from the Queen." Aeneas is too thunderstruck to care, but Shalmanezzer says, "As my lord Aeneas has said, it's but a joke." The Queen asks who is responsible for such a happy jest. Both men, hoping to find favour, claim to have thought of the idea, each saying that it was he who taught a slave to play at Providence. However, as the High-Priest says, the identity of the slave can soon be discovered. So saying, he cries, "Come out, whoe'er you are inside the shrine." And out steps Bel. He dismisses both men in a stern but just manner. Dido intercedes, and asks that their sentences be lightened; that Shalmanezzer shall be excused his political debts, and that Aeneas may draw upon the



resources of the Carthaginian fleet. Bel agrees and calls upon the populace to cheer their good Queen "whose crown is set with those three royal gems, mercy, justice, truth." The crowd rise and sing with increased fervour a prolonged version of the Carthaginian National Anthem.

As the music in this opera was confined almost entirely to the second act (which, however, is continuous music), I used an extra chorus, which fulfilled the rôle of overture to the first and second acts, expatiating upon the nature of Hypocrisy, its uses in history, its comic side, and its final destruction.

Other operas constructed upon original plots with music as an integral part of the story have been begun and dropped because they failed to meet what I consider the public school requirements. These two which I have outlined, in spite of their apparent complications, have been found very easy to perform because a couple of sheets transform a fashionable young Englishman into a solemn old Athenian. I must admit that the purity of my scheme was frequently marred by the intrusion of a topical song, but then boys are always boys, and breaking-up is always breaking-up, yea even unto the breaking-up of theories.

A. E. BRENT SMITH.

## MUSIC IN "THE TEMPEST"

"It is a solemn thought," says Sir James Barrie, "that almost no one—if he is truly eminent—knows what he means." And it is one of Shakespeare's most potent fascinations that he dwells (for us) in eternal chiaroscuro; incalculable; with dark secrets lurking behind locked lips—a latter-day Sphinx, and, like her, half-blurred by the encroachment of the creeping sands.

Endless the riddles he propounds: "we ask and ask," or maybe, in a temerarious moment, we answer—for this is not the species that devours. Do we rede it aright? Is this the authentic solution? *Is* there a solution? What a Rabelaisian quest of the *Grand Peut-être*!

Was it mere and sheer coincidence, I wonder, that made him put those words into the mouth of Charmian—a proverbial saying—that she loved long life better than figs, when he was prescient that death, and not long life, was her portion—undreamt of death, lying in wait for her with venomous fangs; death coiled clandestine in a basket of—figs?

Then, among the thousand aery hints, intangible intimations of *The Tempest*, what oracular wisdoms does he shadow forth in that consecration of music as the medium of purposive power?

For if Prospero is the "little god o' the world," the Providence and Cloud-compeller of his island universe, then is music his Sinai thunder, his singing of trumpets, and still, small voice, wherewith he melts the hearts of men and fashions them to his liking. And the crier of his decrees, his music-maker, his famulus, his attendant echo—who but delicate Ariel?

Myriad-mooded as the old sea-shepherd, when music winds her "wreathed horn," what mortal shall evade the summons? This one she allures, and threatens that; here sheds a calm, and there delusion; now croons a lullaby, now shrills a reveillé; and overwhelms with madness, only—bane and anodyne in one—to restore to the daylight of reason.

Those "noises, sounds and sweet airs" are indigenous, no doubt; "qualities o' the isle," or of its wingy denizens. Caliban has heard them humming about his ears. Perhaps Sycorax herself was not impervious—who knows?—and unbent a little from that hoopish attitude which "age and envy"—and rheumatism, I suspect—had induced.

But observe how, with the entrance of the "men of sin," these vagrant and irresponsible melodies are conscripted—

"To work mine end upon their senses that  
This airy charm is for,"

says Prospero. They assume a moral tone; become music-with-a-purpose; surprise Ferdinand with funereal allusions to his father; and arrange his encounter with the "top of admiration," who loses her heart with such engaging precipitance.

The mystery of the music's compulsive power Ferdinand is at a loss to unravel.

"Thence I have follow'd it,  
Or it hath drawn me rather."

His conjecture that it is "no sound that the earth owes" we may pass over as the sciolistic presumption of a young man whose cosmology is still in the rudimentary stages. What theory Trinculo and Stephano (O King Stephano!) formed on the subject is not revealed. Perhaps they had no theory. They simply

"Lifted up their noses  
As they smelt music,"

and followed the tabor with such doglike fidelity that we almost forgive them their moonstruck royalist ambitions, and wish they had been spared a baptism so malodorous.

Caliban, after this adventure, will presumably eat his description of "airs, that give delight and hurt not." The poor monster's reminiscences are most charmingly naïve. Consider that of the syren voices, more hypnotic than poppy or mandragora, and with such golden visions ensuing—

"That, when I waked,  
I cried to dream again."

Rarest fancy of all is that of opiate sounds which subdue without being so much as perceptible to the sense. It is the conspiracy scene: Alonso, Gonzalo and the rest fall, "as by consent," into a trance, much to the astonishment of the traitorous pair, who are immune from this "strange drowsiness." Some "quality o' the climate"? The reader alone is aware of Ariel near by, "playing

solemn music"; yet it is that artist who, piping his "ditties of no tone" and "melodies unheard," has staged this little affair—for the benefit of nobody in particular, I remark.

And it is a "solemn air" which Prospero bespeaks when the erring princes, "distracted" into penitence, are to be liberated and made whole. Beneath its medicating influence the "charm dissolves apace," what time the Magian, standing approvingly by, draws that beautiful comparison to the morning, which

"Steals upon the night,  
Melting the darkness."

Ariel I believe to be incapable of utterance except in song, in spite of his occasional blank-verse speeches. Even when he denounces the usurping Duke, his æolian words unsung resemble the titanic orchestration of the elements:

"Methought the billows spoke. . .  
The winds did sing it to me; and the thunder,  
That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounced  
The name of Prosper."

In "Where the bee sucks"—a resilience of pure joy at the prospect of release from further troublesome "spiriting"—we have a sign that the unnatural human tyranny over the island music is past: henceforth it shall roam at its own elfin pleasure, lovelier because aimless, merging in the immemorial antiphony of wind and sea.

R. SEYMOUR BARDER.

## IMPRESSIONS OF "LA VALKYRIE" AT THE GRAND OPERA OF PARIS

THE first impression I had was that the house would be empty. I was not a very early arrival, and I found an ocean of empty seats around me. A few nights ago I was present at a performance of Massenet's *Thaïs*, and on that occasion the house was full to overflowing when I arrived. However, with the first bars of the Prelude to *The Valkyrie*, the audience began to saunter in. During the whole of the first Act they continued walking in—mostly with animated conversations, often with violent discussions about their seats.

"Mais enfin, Monsieur, puisque je vous dis que c'est bien là votre place! Ce n'est pas ma faute si vous ne la trouvez pas bonne!"  
... and so forth and so on—while Sieglinde, Siegmund and Hunding were sitting at their evening meal.

Of course we all know the irritation of late-comers at Covent Garden, but after all the cases are comparatively rare and do not last longer than the first few minutes of Act I.

I, with my Covent Garden ideas, imagined that in a very few minutes my troubles would be over, and that I should be allowed to listen to *La Valkyrie*.

But in this I was quite mistaken. The arrivals continued practically up to the end of the first Act.

I was perhaps peculiarly unfortunate because, as far as I could observe, in one box only was any sustained conversation going on—one quite outspoken, not even in loud whispers. This box was on my left. I was seated in the *Fauteuils de Balcon* on the extreme left, and those who know the house will remember that the "Premières Loges" are raised about a foot higher than this. The box I refer to was tenanted by an old lady covered with diamonds, a *Douairière* of the Faubourg S. Germain type. She was with a young and elegant-looking Frenchwoman.

It must have been about the moment when Sieglinde relates to Siegmund her strange wedding day, and the history of the sword, that the door of this box was opened and two distinguished-looking Frenchmen joined the two ladies. From that moment a sustained conversation was kept up. I looked up in bewilderment to see if the occupants of the next box had no objections to make. But no. They



themselves were quite silent, as were the people around me (with one exception)—but no one seemed the least surprised or perturbed at the box that was conversing in audible tones.

The exceptions near my seat were three Spanish people, who talked in audible whispers steadily through the evening. I looked round several times in my best "forbidding" manner—one which my own friends assure me ought never to fail—but those around me, if they noticed at all, seemed only vaguely to wonder why I should be turning my head.

There was evidently nothing extraordinary either in the sustained conversation in the box, or in the continual whispering of the Spaniards—it irritated no one and got on no one's nerves.

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With regard to the actual performance, it is not my province to criticise, and my remarks are merely the personal impressions I received—my individual angle and point of view.

From the opening bars of the prelude I knew at once I was going to hear the notes—all accurately rendered—and nothing more. It reminded me of so many piano recitals we hear where all the notes are given, and the technique of the player is beyond reproach—and there is not much more to be said!

As soon as the curtain was up, there were all sorts of small details to observe we are not accustomed to—Sieglinde's fire had brass pots and kettles on it, le "pot au feu" probably simmering for Hunding's supper. Then there was a deep openwork frieze right round the hut, and through this open space we saw the trees of the forest waving outside.

When Hunding arrived, Sieglinde did not go to the door to let him in—he let himself in, and left the door wide open behind him. She did go to shut it.

When he told her to prepare the evening meal, she went straight to the fire—I thought she was going to take off the "pot au feu." Not at all. She lit a torch and brandished it, as though she were Brünnhild lighting the funeral pyre. I could not imagine what she was going to do!

It was only to light up the supper table—and she fixed the torch in due course in the trunk of the tree.

It was also curious to see Hunding sit down alone at the deserted supper table, while Sieglinde was preparing the night potion. Apart from these trifling variants, I cannot remember anything else unusual in the first Act. The singers themselves? I wish I could say what I

## IMPRESSIONS OF "LA VALKYRIE" AT THE GRAND OPERA OF PARIS

THE first impression I had was that the house would be empty. I was not a very early arrival, and I found an ocean of empty seats around me. A few nights ago I was present at a performance of Massenet's *Thaïs*, and on that occasion the house was full to overflowing when I arrived. However, with the first bars of the Prelude to *The Valkyrie*, the audience began to saunter in. During the whole of the first Act they continued walking in—mostly with animated conversations, often with violent discussions about their seats.

"Mais enfin, Monsieur, puisque je vous dis que c'est bien là votre place! Ce n'est pas ma faute si vous ne la trouvez pas bonne!"

. . . . . and so forth and so on—while Sieglinde, Siegmund and Hunding were sitting at their evening meal.

Of course we all know the irritation of late-comers at Covent Garden, but after all the cases are comparatively rare and do not last longer than the first few minutes of Act I.

I, with my Covent Garden ideas, imagined that in a very few minutes my troubles would be over, and that I should be allowed to listen to *La Valkyrie*.

But in this I was quite mistaken. The arrivals continued practically up to the end of the first Act.

I was perhaps peculiarly unfortunate because, as far as I could observe, in one box only was any sustained conversation going on—one quite outspoken, not even in loud whispers. This box was on my left. I was seated in the *Fauteuils de Balcon* on the extreme left, and those who know the house will remember that the "Premières Loges" are raised about a foot higher than this. The box I refer to was tenanted by an old lady covered with diamonds, a *Douairière* of the Faubourg S. Germain type. She was with a young and elegant-looking Frenchwoman.

It must have been about the moment when Sieglinde relates to Siegmund her strange wedding day, and the history of the sword, that the door of this box was opened and two distinguished-looking Frenchmen joined the two ladies. From that moment a sustained conversation was kept up. I looked up in bewilderment to see if the occupants of the next box had no objections to make. But no. They

themselves were quite silent, as were the people around me (with one exception)—but no one seemed the least surprised or perturbed at the box that was conversing in audible tones.

The exceptions near my seat were three Spanish people, who talked in audible whispers steadily through the evening. I looked round several times in my best "forbidding" manner—one which my own friends assure me ought never to fail—but those around me, if they noticed at all, seemed only vaguely to wonder why I should be turning my head.

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did just now about the orchestra, that they gave all the notes. Truly, the singers did not always do so. The Siegmund was, however, a fine impersonation and the Hunding fairly adequate. The Sieglinde gave me the idea of a *jeune fille, très jeune fille and tout-à-fait comme il faut!* She had been brought up in a convent quite obviously—and it was equally obvious that her singing lessons while there must have been of no use.

So that when the curtain fell on the first Act, even that marvellous finale could stir no pulses, could arouse no enthusiasm. La Claque was there to raise the curtain two or three times—but the audience were frankly bored and looked it.

For the second Act, we had a very handsome and very conventional Brünnhild. Wotan was deplorable—short and tubby, with a red Assyrian beard and a figure reminiscent of Punchinello. It was a magnificent scene and a joy and a delight to see it brilliantly lit. This was truly unusual to my "Covent Garden" eyes and I never can understand why, in these days, all our Wagnerian scenes are given in the dark!

But Brünnhild now sang her "Valkyrie hail" at the rising of the curtain, and when she had finished it, I got the most violent shock I had yet had, in an evening of many shocks to my nerves! At this point La Claque broke forth furiously and strenuously and brought the house down! I can't remember that Brünnhild bowed her acknowledgments, but if she did not, I think she should have.

After this Fricka arrived in a real chariot and drawn by rams—not, not real rams, but very excellent toys. The Fricka was distinctly very good. I may say at once that the Siegmund and the Fricka were the two singers in the cast who gave the idea that they both understood and appreciated the great work they were singing.

When a little later Wotan cut out his Monologue altogether, I am bound to say it came to me rather as a relief. I had been thinking about that Monologue and wondered what sort of effect it was going to have in this particular performance! There was no question of shortening it—it was taken clean out. It was a case of the surgeon's knife.

Brünnhild cast her helmet and shield down, and knelt by his side—he stroked her hair and sang one short phrase. She then rose to her feet, and I was bewildered to find that at this point she had much to say (which I am not accustomed to!)—but when Wotan at once lost his temper with her and strode off, I realised we had reached the end of the scene before we had heard the beginning.

The fight at the end of the Act was beautifully done and most artistically.

But at last, with the raising of the curtain on the third Act, I have arrived at something I can record not only without grumbling, but with profoundest admiration. I think I must have been told somewhere at some time that the Paris "Ride" was a thing to be seen and heard without fail. I am not sure about this, but I am very conscious that the "Ride" itself was the one moment of the evening I felt I must not miss, whatever else I did, and despite the lateness of the hour, and the terrors of the Paris taxi-driver the wrong side of 11 p.m., I determined to wait for it—and truly glad am I that I did so.

I saw the "Ride" as I have always wanted to see it and never yet have, either at Bayreuth or anywhere else.

The Valkyries were at their trysting place on the "highest rock pinnacle," but so high was this rock, it was literally in the clouds. The clouds were rushing at a tremendous pace and the eight sisters were enveloped in them above and below their rock. As each sister arrived in turn, the semblance of the horse and its rider was given with a vivid lighting effect and one saw them in truth riding the storm. For a brief space the orchestra threw off its apathy—probably familiarity with the number had a good deal to do with this—and the stage effect was so truly magnificent, no wonder it was felt in the entire performance. A notable innovation was to place the Valkyrie rock in the centre of the stage instead of on the right, as we habitually see it. In a performance where so much was pathetically, not to say tragically, amiss, it was curious to find that the eight Valkyries were so perfectly rehearsed in this most terribly difficult of all scenes, and that it went with authority, with maestria, from first to last. Each one of them not only knew every note and every phrase of her part, but each also knew every movement that was right and supremely natural and effective. There was no flurried and aimless running up and down of the rocky steps—no over-acting or disconcertingly piping voices—here were the eight Valkyries, daughters of Wotan—the wild uncanny riders of the clouds—and with true magnificence did they convey the scene.

. . . . .

One is left wondering how just one scene came to stand out, as this one did, in a performance which could only be characterised as lamentable. It was this, not so much from any incompetence on the part of singers or orchestra—as from the most obvious fact that both singers and orchestra were interpreting a work they did not remotely understand. They one and all had learnt their parts in a language they do not know. That is what it amounted to.



Are we to think that the scene of the Ride is so gloriously dramatic that, for just this space and for no more, it appeals to the French genius for *mise en scène*?

I can give no answer to the query; I can only give the facts as I saw them for myself—and need I say that this one scene of the Ride was sufficient compensation to me for the not conspicuously happy evening I had spent?

ROSE K. FAREBROTHER.

## THE GREAT AMERICAN OPERA

EVEN before the War the go-getter\* made the significant discovery that America produces opera on non-Rotarian principles. Local endeavour, he found, is completely ignored: it is the foreign composers and directors and singers who do all the business; that is why we must put up with all sorts of outlandish music and librettos, sung in every language but our own. And the pity of it—this the burden of his plaint—is that we are the most lavish patrons in the world of operatic art.

The remedy for this, as for any other industrial weakness, lay, of course, in proper advertising. A field must be created through effective publicity. We must boost our brother the American composer. We must push his ware so that he might not only compete with those foreigners, but eventually capture their trade. The reason American opera was not on the market was simply that nobody had encouraged it.

The excellently geared Rotarian wheels have been turning for more than a decade. Out has come an astonishing mass of musical campaign material. We are besought, if we are at all worthy of our citizenship, to give ear to the great American composers, whose divinely inspired masterpieces we persist in ignoring. Editorial writers turn to the subject for a safe half-column in their newspapers when the opera season begins or closes. (It is, they feel, their patriotic duty to do so. It is also, peradventure, less complicated a musical problem than a critical appraisal of, say, Ravel or Borodin

\* Below is the author's response to my request for a short glossary.—[Ed.]

The three terms you ask me to translate are popular additions to the American language:—

*Go-getter*—one who "goes and gets it" ("it" referring to the only thing in life worth going and getting, namely business—orders, subscriptions, contracts, etc.). The go-getter does not talk, think, dream, or play: he merely points to the row of figures after the dollar sign at the foot of the page.

*Rotarian*—member of Rotary Club, one of the best known clubs for go-getters, with local chapters everywhere in the United States. Here, with plentiful handshaking and backslapping, the two-fisted, red-blooded, up-and-doing, meet-all-comers type of virile American businessmen come together for the ostensible purpose of securing "it" from one another—in rotation.

*Nordic*—a virulent kind of American who shouts to Negroes, Catholics, Jews, Southern Europeans, Slavs, Orientals, and South Americans: "Go back where you came from! Mine is the American earth and the fulness thereof!"—He vociferates so loudly that he would never even hear you if you tried to ask him about the American Indians.

or Stravinsky or Scriabin.) Even artists of reputation have been caught in the huge Rotarian wheel, and have found themselves patrons of American music, virtually subscribing to the Press agent's alchemy, whereby a good American who composes is transmuted into a good American composer.

Following the methods of other genuine Americans whose racial purity is threatened, our musicians organised against the ubiquitous foreigner. And then their organisations—the New York Society for the Promotion of Grand Opera in English, the Opera in Our Language Foundation, the American Opera Society of Chicago, the Society of American Singers, the Society for the Publication of American Music, the American Department of the National Federation of Music Clubs, and no end of local and specialised organisations for the advancement of American composers for the piccolo or American performers on the kettledrum—these organisations proceeded to announce to our country the happy tidings that we are giving birth to a new art. By way of preparation and incidental festivity there have been celebrated music weeks and communal festivals and all-American concerts; and there have been Chautauqua lectures and, more recently, radio programmes; and there have been competitions for American composers, and awards of thousand and ten thousand dollar prizes for American compositions. Local interest has been aroused, and when the local chambers of commerce for good enough reasons became interested, the success of the campaign was assured. If there is any part of America that is not by this time aware of the fact that American music is making itself heard, it must be afflicted with mastoiditis of both ears.

For further demonstration of how flourishing is the trade in music "Made in America" one need only send for the formidable catalogues of our music publishers. Or, one may consult Mr. O. G. Sonneck, who was chief of the Music Division of the Library of Congress, upon whose staff there descended the annual avalanches of offerings from musical America. Mr. Sonneck directs the professional bewailers of how we stifle our native talent to the paralysing pages of the *Copyright Bulletin*, where they will find their wildest pleas in behalf of American music answered in ghastly fashion. No, the American composer certainly feels no restraint upon his productiveness from without. What gives less cause for rejoicing, he feels no restraint from within either, such as is exercised in the creation of art rather than trade.

In vain have a few enlightened voices been lifted against our senseless descant of notes, notes, notes, with the disturbing criticism that our composers have little of importance to say, and that, as a rule, they proceed to say it with a lamentable lack of technique. It is

not so much the absence of originality in our music that makes the European lift his eyebrows; it is the sheer incompetence of it when judged even by the classroom standards of a Continental conservatory. The truth is that our composers are ignorant not only of the vastly complicated problems of modern orchestration, but even of the quite orthodox principles of harmony and counterpoint. And so whatever available material our composers have seized upon—the Indian and Negro chants, the Creole songs of Louisiana, the remains of English balladry in Kentucky, the experiments in jazz and syncopation—has been turned into ill-sustained attempts or drawn-out commonplaces.

We do things big in our country, and so, regardless of these limitations, we decided to produce the biggest (that is, the showiest) form of music: we decided to have American grand opera. We really could not go into the problem of why opera has been created by comparatively few countries. Would you question our superiority to Germany, France, Italy or Russia in other activities? Well, then, given but a fair chance, could we not produce our own Wagner, Debussy, Verdi, Moussorgsky, and once for all establish the superiority of the Nordic race over the German, Slavic and Latin hordes?

The answer is at hand. A complete list of all known American composers of grand opera—sixty altogether, to whom are credited some ninety completed scores—is being distributed (with unpardonable pride) by the American Opera Society of Chicago. Here, then, is the result of the labouring of the Press agents. Here is the new-born art that was heralded with such vociferously trumpeted annunciations.

Less than a dozen of these operas survived such initial performance as may have been given them by church choir or local chapter of the National Federation of Music Clubs. The rest collapsed at once; a few post-mortems point to general debility, aggravated by quite sickening characters, an anæmic or else hot and hectic plot, and a fatally deranged score. Those that did have virility enough to reach one of the major opera houses therefore include—unless the producers be assumed to be imbeciles—the best grand opera that America has achieved. In number and significance, 1925 A.D., they call for no more extended exposition than such as can here be given them. The fact that they lasted but one season (except *Shanewis*, which was attempted a second season before it was carted off to the lumber room) speaks for itself. For the productions, given as they were by the most competent opera houses in the world, left nothing to be desired.

There is, *imprimis*, Horatio W. Parker's *Mona*, awarded the

Metropolitan \$10,000 prize in 1912 after several years of open competition. (Converse's *The Pipe of Desire*, the first experiment in American opera, was mercifully forgotten by that time.) Professor Parker's musicianship was admitted to be as sound as that of any American composer. But his elaborate scheme of associating his characters with definite keys (and of resorting to incessant modulations, accordingly, which you could follow only if you had the score before you), and his stiff attempts to preserve the accents and cadences of the speaking voice, give his composition a stilted, and at the same time restless awkwardness, an absence of symphonic and dramatic development, a general unrelieved bleakness that made an evening of it wearisome beyond endurance.\*

Item, Walter Damrosch's *Cyrano*, whose *succès d'estime* was proclaimed as the dawn of a new era, whose lack of originality was euphemistically termed "felicity of reminiscence," and whose inconsistency of treatment was politely called "eclectic." This is significant: his musical setting does not conform with the accent and inflection of the vernacular. The one memorable thing about it seems to be the outstanding leading motive attached to Cyrano's nose—a scale passage in whole tone intervals.

Item, *St. Elizabeth*—Liszt's oratorio turned into English opera, with pious folk "uttering platitudes in stained-glass attitudes"; with papa-in-law's musical volubility at its worst. Altogether, dull to distraction.

Item, Charles W. Cadman's *Shanewis*, which was complimented for its "simplicity" by critics who did not care to be too outspoken about its crude lyrics, its attempts at colloquial English which, when turned into opera, really sounded like burlesque, its triangle plot, now given the considerable distinction of being possibly the most stupid in the realm of opera. Together with *Shanewis* was produced Henry W. Gilbert's *Dance in Place Congo*, a rhapsody on Negro rhythms and songs: a highfalutin version of what Williams and Walker used to do.

Item, Reginald de Koven's *Canterbury Pilgrims*, musically empty except where the professional comic opera writer resorted to hackneyed devices. (Here, again, we are impressed with how the music *distorts* the English inflection.) Similarly, *Rip van Winkle*, again the Great American Opera based on American folk tunes—these being, presumably, some sweetish, musical comedy melodies. Two great

\* The judges of the contest, Mr. Kahn tells me, at first refused to make the award, declaring that they thought none of the manuscripts submitted deserving of so large a prize. It was only upon the urgent demand of the Board of Directors, who wanted to show their good faith in making their offer, that the least inept of the operas was selected.



principles of American opera were expressed by de Koven when this work of his was produced: one, that orchestral intricacy is a composer's ineffective method of hiding an absence of melody; the other, that opera must have a glad effect on you. What there is of merit in *Rip van Winkle* is such stuff as *Robin Hood* is made of.

Item, Henry Hadley's *Bianca*, with its prosy speeches—as good an example as we have of what happens when the language of our daily life is chanted at us from the opera stage. Hadley has no noticeable individuality of style. Those who sat through the one performance of his *Azora* at the Lexington Theatre found some diversion in counting up the number of standard operas with which he was on intimate terms. His *Cleopatra's Night* is more original. An explanatory sentence of his offers sufficient criticism of it, and serves at the same time as another beacon light for our operatic practitioners: "Fluent, even obvious, melody I should put first on the list of operatic desiderata, and I have actually put it first in composing my *Cleopatra* music."

Item—the most recent, and possibly the most pathetic of our attempts at national opera—*The Garden of Mystery*, again by Cadman, offered last March. The production, to be sure, was so wretched that the highest praise that could be given the conductor was that he kept the thing going at all. But certainly the score was not worth that achievement: for its obvious solos and duets, separated by chromatic recitatives (intended to be "modern," presumably, or else to lend contrasting grace to the empty tunes), were composed for an orchestra that—in Carnegie Hall especially—sounded too anemic to live through the single act. Occasional injections of Wagner and Tchaikowsky brought momentary relief. The libretto, whatever could be heard of it, was beyond hope. When the thing had been brought to a final rest everybody was polite and said, "My, how nice that scenery was that the Metropolitan had sent over to help out!"

Besides these, there are occasional notices in the trade journals that we call our musical weeklies and monthlies, of performances of this and that epoch-making new American opera. The more distant and obscure the stage of the performance, the shriller, of course, must be the jubilant eureka, if it is to be heard at all. Only by looking through these trade journals from time to time is it possible to fathom the artistic and intellectual level at which American opera is being produced and advertised. A few selected examples will suffice, culled in this instance from a single page of the October, 1924, issue of the Official Bulletin of the National Federation.

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and enjoy more that way than by attending a whole year of concerts where others do the work—the fun is to be in the fight, not looking on!"

A Mr. Ralph Lyford, who produced his grand opera *Castle Agrasant* last year before the unappreciative burghers of Cincinnati, intimates delicately a mystic advent: "Let the American learn to love the stage, its life, its art problems and peculiarities, and let him know the sting of life and love, and let this fuse into the pathos of his musical expression, then a composer will appear of whom America may be proud."

Announcement is made of the forthcoming production of the Great American Opera—this time named *Alplala*. Nothing is said of who wrote it or the nature of the story, the characters, or the music. What we do learn is that "Cecil Fanning, the celebrated baritone, will appear in the double rôle of singer and author (librettist), and, as the Indian lover, wears a marvellous Indian beaded costume."

Indian subjects predominate in the list compiled by the American Opera Society. The theme of the Great American Opera, we have decided, must be native, of the soil. We first give credence to Taine's quaint notion that a country's art, no less than its agriculture, is dependent upon its physiography; that books and songs, like alf-alfa, may be estimated in terms of inches of annual rainfall. Then we look about for indigenous musical material for grand opera that will express the spirit of indigenous America; and we conclude that the most pertinent must be the chants of the Indians—the most alien music ethnically that we could hit upon; except, possibly (the inevitable alternative), the Negro chants and rhythms.

Not for a moment may we admit that, so far at least, we have shown no talent for the creation of opera. Great Britain, subject to pretty much the same Anglo-Saxon limitations, seems reconciled to the production of foreign works; and is disposed to accept, as far as she is concerned, Dr. Johnson's definition of grand opera as "an exotic and irrational entertainment."\* We are more sensitive. We lament the way our composers are ignored. We bemoan the prestige of all sorts of outlandish music and librettos, sung in every language but English. And the pity of it—this the burden of our plaint—is that we are the most lavish patrons in the world of operatic art.

It was when the War broke out that the campaign for American opera became modified, or rather muddled, by the demand for opera in English. There were sensible citizens who had always denounced

\* There is in England, to be sure, considerable interest just now in the production of native opera, owing to the successful revival last year of "The Beggar's Opera." But the works produced by the British National Opera Company give only further proof of how alien is the art to an Englishman: they are either satires on the conventional grand opera (in the manner of Sullivan), like Holst's "The Perfect Fool," or, if they attempt a "grand" theme, like Boughton's "Alkestis" and "Bethlehem," they go so far to avoid sounding like Italian or German grand opera that they have recourse merely to simple tunes and folksongs. The same tendency is shown in the productions of the Royal College of Music: Gibbs' "The Blue Peter" and "Midsummer Madness," Vaughan Williams' "Hugh the Drover," &c.

the production of opera in foreign languages as a highbrow affectation. They had a right, they maintained, to understand what was sung on the stage. The explanation was patiently made to them that the composer set his music to a definite text; that his musical phrase is expressive of the corresponding verbal; that in the higher type of music drama the sound of every word, of every letter often, is significant; that English equivalents are impossible because of peculiarities of syntax, of rhythm and accent, of verbal connotation, &c. Whereupon the sensible citizens turned upon you and shot their other barrel: what mattered all these trivialities, anyway? Surely, if you were at all a music lover, you went to the opera to hear the music and not the silly words!<sup>\*</sup>

Rightminded people, naturally, refused to be perturbed over this Lilliputian issue. So the champions of opera in English put megaphones to their mouths and proclaimed to our unsuspecting country that our national honour was being outraged by our opera producers, who were openly contemptuous of the language of our forefathers. Germany, France and Italy performed all opera, no matter what the original, in their native tongue. Of us, only, must it be said that we found our vernacular unendurable. It was useless to point out, as Mr. Otto H. Kahn did, that the European countries were making a virtue of necessity; that they simply could not afford the vastly greater expense of producing operas, as they should be produced, in the original—as they are produced at the Metropolitan and at the Chicago Opera House, and (without the accompaniment of patriotic *Katzenjammer*) at Covent Garden in London. It was useless: the demand for opera in English grew until the editors of the *Literary Digest* had enough quotations to paste together an article on our neglect of native opera. That meant that thereafter the question was of national importance.

When we marshalled our forces against Germany, the boosters of our native opera saw their great opportunity. They discovered that Wagner was a Hun, and that his dramas presented love scenes that were passionate and un-American; that his music thenceforth was a source of anguish to our properly nurtured ears. For three years Wagner was held at bay by our stout-hearted defenders against a possible invasion of Teutonic clefs and staves. Not until long after we had faced the political, military and economic post-war problems did we dare take up this dangerous question of readmitting *The Ring* and *Tristan*. We decided to be as liberal as was consistent with safety: we would have the dramas translated into English, and then

<sup>\*</sup> This attitude is shared, apparently, by at least one manufacturer of librettos. Mr. Percy MacKaye, who supplied the text for De Koven's "Canterbury Pilgrims," has been quoted as saying that "words exist in opera merely because singers must, of course, have something to sing."



have them restored to our stage gradually, one or two only every season, lest the shock be too great for our tender sensibilities.\* There are, perhaps, those who feel we have been hasty: hardly seven years have elapsed since peace was declared; and yet—with the restoration of *Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung* this season—we are already permitting the same quota of German music drama in our country as we did in 1917. We are letting bygones be bygones, and have extended our full pardon to Wagner.

Altogether we have acted with commendable regard for our national dignity. The British showed themselves ever so much more thick-skinned. It never occurred to them even during the War to become outraged by the "Waldweben" or the Rhinemaids' song. And they sat through complete performances of *Tristan* while Zeppelins overhead were dropping down bombs upon them. Fancy that!

The demand to have the restored German music dramas sung in English was hailed with delight by the campaign managers of the "drive" for great American opera. Once we became accustomed to hearing English on the operatic stage, they felt, we would tolerate the foreign languages no longer. But even the opera goer, who accepts complacently the quite unbelievable drivel that as a rule is served him by way of text, began to balk. No matter how slight his acquaintance with German, he suspected Wagner's lines to be compounded of both sense and feeling. And even a drowsy pants manufacturer, undergoing his weekly ordeal at the Metropolitan, worried by a persistently élite wife beside him, and tormented by the thought of having extended too much credit to his new customer in Elmira, knew that something was the matter when, for example, the greatest love duet ever composed was rendered—according to Forman's translation, the best available—as follows:—

*Isolde*: Faithlessly fondest.  
*Tristan*: Deathlessly dearest . . .  
*Both*: Seas in our hearts  
 To billows are shaken!  
 My mind in a tempest  
 Of madness is taken!  
 Lifts me the surge  
 Of a sense beyond name!  
 Fills me a goading  
 Gladdening flame!  
 My bosom the bliss  
 Can bear not of this!

\* Once, to be sure, we were rather rash: in 1919 we permitted a German opera company to present excerpts from *Die Meistersinger* at the Lexington Theatre. Whereupon the more delicately attuned of our ex-service men took to arms and intercepted the performance with a barrage of bricks and bottles. From this we learn how dangerous it is to trifle with a community that has a sharp artistic conscience.

The German text was restored, opera in English suffered a setback, and the Opera in Our Language Foundations in letters to the newspapers wept bitterly over the restlessness of our forefathers in their graves. The artistic stimulus of the War was lost. What the American opera booster must have had in mind was that the battered English versions of the German music drama could not possibly have any seductive power, and would leave the American listener at the end of the performance loyal to his native institutions. That would have given added prestige to our native art. For all judgment of art is comparative, and ignorance of the greater is blissful enjoyment of the lesser. And so the War might have produced—or rather brought out of its ecliptic state into light—a great American music drama. And so the War might have been a tremendous stimulus and inspiration to American music drama. Q.E.D.

Our two great opera houses have again assured us that they will not modify their policy to preserve the original language of the texts. That is gratifying when the libretto has poetic and dramatic merit. It is no less gratifying when the libretto, as is generally the case, consists of unrelieved twaddle. For nonsense finds something of a refuge in the foreign language: it is quite blatantly exposed only when it appears in the vernacular. In our language, to be sure, what the tenor lets forth is all arrant rot; but, look you, such may be the thoughts and feelings of people who have stranded on the coast of Bohemia or dwell in the pleasure-dome of the great Khan of Xanadu. These, we are willing to believe, do express themselves in just such bombast, and are naturally given to senseless raving.

If English is ever to be the language of the music drama it must be English that induces what Coleridge calls a willing suspension of disbelief. That is the effect created by the speech of Siegmund or Hagen or Hans Sachs. That is also the effect created by Lear or Milton's Satan or Shelley's Prometheus. Possibly there is something supreme about English poetry, especially our symphonic and musically dramatic blank verse, that permits of no contributory musical setting. Possibly the art of musical composition is not an Anglo-Saxon art. Possibly a really great Anglo-Saxon composer, or a great American composer, simply has not as yet appeared. Whatever the cause, it seems we must continue to draw our operatic supplies from foreign lands. We cannot as yet compete with the foreign musical markets, in spite of the widespread activities of the associated women's music clubs of America, the dauntless accoucheuses of our as yet puny infant industry. We must continue to let the foreigners reap the benefit. And the pity, oh the pity of it, is that we are the most lavish patrons in the world of operatic art.

B. M. STEIGMAN.

## THE PRAGUE FESTIVAL.

Is it reasonable to expect a man to swim with measured stroke in the swirls and torrents of present-day human production? The Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music at Prague afforded a rare opportunity for judging the work of the younger contemporary composers. But the opportunity was not always easy to seize, for often it happened that the intimacy and close concentration of the occasion made confusion worse confounded. An event which enables you to be hearing the music of a composer at one moment, and at the next to be confronting his personality, seems in theory to be an ideal arrangement for the obtaining of clear and reasonable judgment. In point of fact the facility increases difficulty; personality works in a strangely contradictory way, and often enough the thought came forcibly home: "Good were it for that man that he had never been met." Even a musical critic—be he never so austere—cannot be expected to be untouched by personal attributes, and unfortunately the majority of these younger European composers ignore the claims of ordinary polite human relationship. It is possible to forgive Beethoven for his misdemeanours, and even Wagner for his sorry practice of manhood; but one must beg for the privilege of prejudice in dealing with those whose work is but tentative.

Now that I have left these personal impressions behind, however, I feel that I can the better and more fairly turn to a consideration of the merits and direction of their work.

With the exception of the works of Malipiero, Vaughan Williams, Béla Bartók, Darius Milhaud, and a few others the music heard at the three orchestral concerts of the Festival was the result of ardent discipleship. I wrote just now that the music was for the most part tentative. This is true only in a sense. Actually, the technical equipment and even the expressive power were often alarmingly assured. These young men have been well grounded by their Gamaliels; but they have also been ground down, bartered, and stunted. (It is tantalising to meet with a facility which has little or nothing to facilitate.) Not that they are without ideas, these prophetic minds; far, far from it; they enumerate ideas as quickly, neatly, and correctly as a Cash Register. But there is indeed that further quality of balance—without which even a Cash Register is cumbersome—to weld these ideas into a definite conception. Conception—need we bring to mind?—is not necessarily concerned with magnitude; but it is vitally concerned with consistency, and of consistency we find but little trace among the disciple-composers for all their brightness and aptitude. There is a tendency among them to write mere "paper-music." Their scores are often a delight to the visual sense; they are set out with immaculate delicacy and a real sense of design (visual again). But in transporting them to the aural sense there is heavy duty to pay, and their value is sadly reduced. You may say of these scores that they are written with an eye—but not an ear—to sound.

Only one notable exception did I encounter, and that was the most meticulous script I have ever looked upon; its effect as music was hardly less entrancing. This was a *Partita* for Orchestra by Paul Amadeus Pisk, who is thirty-one years of age, and a pupil of Schönberg.

The work illustrates the tendency of the younger school to re-exploit the polyphonic style; it is also one of the most successful adventures therein I have heard of late, and precisely because it is so reflective of an intimate, personal style. Paul Stefan says of the second movement—the *Courante*—that it follows the classical example—a misleading statement. It follows the classical form in no more than this—that it is definitely a *Courante* in feeling. But no other than Pisk could have written it, and that is an intoxicating thing to find in a composer of thirty. The counterpoint throughout the "*Partita*" is of the dry-point order, even when double wind-instruments are called into play.

It is true also that no other than Ernest Krenek could have written the *Concerto Grosso*, which was heard later. (I refer to the second; the first I have never heard.) But how differing a judgment must we derive here! From the very outset it is obvious that Krenek is intent upon revealing all that Schreker has ever taught him. He does so with a sure hand and a clean, clear mind. The result is a kind of musical exegesis, which makes a *Robot* of Bach. Shapes, the carrying power of curves, the elegance of movement from crest to node, from node to crest, the fusion of varying activity, Krenek cares for none of these things. The texture of his orchestration is alternate oil and water, and this is occasioned not so much by wrong choice of instruments (the orchestration was nearly always very like that of Bach) as by the attempt to combine a series of rigid, lank, combed-out phrases. Krenek, who is twenty-five, is the self-appointed protagonist of "physiological" music, of self-contained music, of music, one might say, which can exist altogether apart from an audience.

Yet,—was ever music more self-contained than that of Béla Bartók? What is it that sets the seal of achievement upon this composer and denies the other? You cannot, with music in your soul, hear one of Bartók's works (of any importance)—of whatsoever period—without realising the double assurance of every touch, the well-ordered direction of each orchestral pigment, the dynamic force of each several rhythmic pattern and the rounded unity within which all these elements securely dwell.

Of all the master-composers of our time Bartók promises to leave behind—has already left behind—the deepest and most permanent impress; in whatever direction he may in the future be impelled by the dark forces which undoubtedly lurk behind that wistful silent countenance, be assured of this with Bartók: of monotony there will be none. The "*Suite de Danses*"—written in 1923 for the celebration in honour of the reunion of Buda and Pest—served to bring the Prague Festival to a fine and memorable close. To hear and to read this music simultaneously is to know well that a master-hand has made its tiny complications subserve a big simplicity. There are a few tortuous by-ways, but even these are used to add momentum to the resultant progression.

The other high-light of the Festival was undoubtedly Vaughan

Williams' "Pastoral Symphony." One did not expect the German critics to take kindly to this, but even they confused their remarks with compromise. Here again in this intense expression is felt the hand of authority. But,—so must we qualify—authority, being an application of greatness can be either innate, achieved or endowed. The authority of Bartók is innate; that of Vaughan Williams is arduously achieved; yet achieved it is, and the "Pastoral Symphony" gives eloquent evidence. The score of the "Suite de Danses" gives the impression of quick accumulation; that of the "Pastoral Symphony" is the result of slow elimination. Method, howbeit, bears only indirectly upon final judgment. It remains true that, after the intent and depressingly serious permutations of the German formulae as practised by Krenek, Finke, and Réti, the Symphony came like "the sweet sound that breathes upon a bank of violets." Adrian Boult conducted the work with great insight. He found difficulty at the rehearsals in moulding the strings of the Czech Philharmonic. They are so infused with the idiom of straight relentless phrasing that at first they did not understand what was required of them for this music—that they should bend so far but never break. The performance, however, seeing that it was the end of an exhausting programme, was surprisingly sympathetic, and evoked a prolonged reception for the composer.

Of the remaining works few call for any special notice. The expressionistic "Half-time" by Bohuslav Martinu—music educed by a football match—is the controlled exuberance of a versatile mind. Malipiero's "Variazioni senza tema" spills colour as festivity spills wine, and to as little purpose. Of Milhaud's "Fragments symphoniques" I could say that the writing is exceedingly well-contrived, but taken out of their context (they were written to illustrate Paul Claudel's "Protée") they lose their essential point. The "Six pièces pour grand orchestre" by György Kosa found great favour with the audience—for reason good enough. Each piece had been labelled with a "mood"—a sure way of bringing the Philistine to heel. Kosa has been a pupil of Bartók since he was eight; not yet, however, has he been able to do more than reflect the brightness of that incisive mind.

BASIL MAINE.



## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

*Wagner as Man and Artist.* Ernest Newman. (Alfred Knopf.)  
Second (American) Edition. 30s.

*Richard Wagner.* George Ainslie Hight. 2 vols. (Arrowsmith.)  
52s. 6d.

*Wagner's Music Drama of the Ring.* L. Archier Leroy. (Noel  
Douglas.) 12s. 6d.

Wagner, it appears, was hurt when a Personage declared himself upon occasion able to distinguish between the "artist" and the "man." For Wagner, though setting the "artist" as high as need be, was not at all disposed to let the "man" go hang. To himself he was very interesting in both capacities. And for posterity he so arranged matters that, whether or not a distinction could be drawn, the "man" should not by any means be overlooked.

At this time of day Wagner's work as "artist"—its content, its form and its purpose—has been so sifted and winnowed and precipitated that it is a marvel to see. It is not the fault of commentators and propagandists if his work is still a glorious reality, instead of a reproach and a faded fashion. Much more man-handling would not seem to be necessary to the building of a bridge between a German genius and the rest of the world. Some no doubt was necessary, and always will be. But not for some time.

Of the three books before us Mr. Newman's was already established as the soundest, sanest, and liveliest on its subject in English. The present edition brings us, as additional matter, some eight pages concerning "Das Liebesverbot," with seventeen musical quotations, and, on the "man" side of things, fresh and interesting evidence about the Laussot episode and Wagner's parentage. Mr. Newman's ability to show what there is to see, to weigh this against that, and to pick up with deft, sure forceps suddenly just the "other" that makes all the difference, has had full scope in this book; it is not least well displayed in the handling of his new matter. One might wish that the format of the book were less transatlantically disharmonious with its British text. But this circumstances will amend in due course, and we shall be welcoming a new British edition of an authoritative work.

Of Mr. Hight's book we feel, as indeed its author almost invites us to remember, that it is some days after the fair. But in so far as labour, enthusiasm, and persistence have obviously gone to the making of it, and as the book is very readable, is packed with information and has a brave aspect in its two gentlemanly volumes, it must be held meritorious. Those who can read with judgment will find the book useful. Especially will it commend itself to any who have not quite

escaped from the kind of idolatry into which so many of us were pushed or persuaded some forty years ago. Mr. Hight is generous with his musical examples, and they are clearly printed. In his quotations from the books of the operas themselves, he uses his own sensible English versions—not the sort of nightmare stuff that has so often to be gulped down by readers and hearers, never to be digested in this world or the next. There is a notable absence of misprints. When, however, he comes to Wagner as “man,” Mr. Hight should be followed more cautiously. He has, we must infer, danced before the idol in his time. His efforts to be strictly impartial are not always successful. In moments of ambiguity—which means almost whenever there is a hint of a conflict between what Wagner wished people to think and what external evidence has to say about it—the Villa Wahnfried “spooks in the orchestra,” to quote Mr. Hight, and he will not, for instance, hear any questioning at all of Wagner’s parentage. It is a wise child that knows its own father whether the inquirer be a supreme and supremely egotistical genius or plain John Citizen. The point is not demonstrable. But Wagner himself thought it was a matter of great importance in painting, as Mr. Newman says, “his own portrait for posterity.” The conclusion one draws—reasoning, alas, partly from Mr. Hight’s book and not wholly from the writings of those whom he condemns (together with apparently all critics of Wagner) as “malevolent,” may be summarised as follows:—

1. Wagner was deeply concerned not only in his work but in himself. He was determined that posterity should view himself in his art as well as his art in himself; and the whole on his own terms.

2. He was, most conveniently for his purpose, not only in an especially favourable position to choose his own father, but his field of choice included a man just after his own heart—a romantic, artistic, vivid, wholly suitable personality.

3. That man was not Karl W. Wagner. He was quite out of the picture when contrasted with Geyer; whom, besides, Wagner had known and with whom he had been in sympathy. Karl Wagner he can never have known at all. Geyer was obviously the man for Wagner’s money.

4. He openly hoped that his own child would be found to present a likeness to Geyer, and when he found that likeness in his son, he went out of his way to emphasise it, and to rejoice in it.

Notwithstanding the above, had Karl Wagner been the painter-actor, and Geyer the worthy small public official, the resolute egoist would probably have pitched with equal enthusiasm on the former as his father. Though, to be sure, a *Wagen* on his seal had been less satisfying to his soul than that *Geier* about which he took so much trouble. Wagner never intended, if he could help it, that there should be any doubt who had made “The Ring.” “The Ring,” he said in effect, was made by me (not by somebody else of the same name) all by myself with the help of certain women and an uncertain number of purses. That is the sort of artist and man I was. And if I glorified Art, why, Art glorified me. And this will always be so. Only one must pick one’s women carefully, and one’s father. And in borrowing money do so, if possible, only from men. They give less trouble.

Perhaps Dante and Shakespeare and Bach and the rest of them were all like that, had each left behind a “Mein Leben.” Perhaps it is

a pity we have not more evidence that they were. And perhaps it is not.

With that last sentence we think the author of our third book is in sympathy. His smaller purpose enables Mr. Leroy to approach the Master respectfully, but he frankly disclaims concern, for his purpose, in the less divine attributes of Wagner whose career he briefly and sufficiently sketches before proceeding to expound "The Ring." Herein he falls, to our mind, considerably short of Mr. Hight. His text has a German turgidity, and his musical examples, rather beautifully done as they are, are not really handy for reference, nor are they without manifest errors. The story of "The Ring" must always remain essentially German, essentially involved, unreal, un-English. In a sense, it is the climax of that busy-ness upon stage fairy-land (with several over-sexual fairies) to which a marvellous boy devoted himself with his toy theatre under the eye of Geyer there in Dresden, well over a century ago. But Mr. Leroy's readers will, we fancy, complain of an indistinctness in his text as well as regret the preciosity and errors of his musical examples. They will, however, study with interest Mr. Paul Nash's wood-cuts of stage-settings for certain acts and scenes out of the four sections of "The Ring." These, in conjunction with some hints of the author concerning the "three-dimensional and panchromatic Kinema of the future," and his stressing of Wagner as producer rather than musician, will give them something to think about. They may also dig a thought or two out of Mr. H. R. Barbor's somewhat haphazard Introduction.

"Such was the creator of the heroic, athletic boy Siegfried—this poor little sickly supersensitive self-indulgent neurotic, who could hardly deny himself the smallest of his innocent little voluptuousnesses. The antinomy would be unresolvable did we not know from a hundred other cases that art is not life, and that the artist may be different from his art." We feel that Mr. Newman has probably got very near the truth. The antinomy is presented ready to be resolved by every man and woman of the world who knows about imaginative art and human beings.

But somehow we would still like to have the observations of one who knew Richard and Minna Wagner in their earliest difficult days—"Robber," the Newfoundland dog. He must have planted his big paws on his little Master's shoulders and have been fondled by the first woman Richard found necessary to him. Remembering the "Pensées de Riquet" of Anatole France, we are sure "Robber's" commentary would be interesting. But probably they both over-fed him, though starving themselves. And so "Robber" died, before he had time to make any notes at all in the biographical way.

W. M.

*The fundamentals of music and their relation to modern life.* By H. Rootham. Published privately. pp. 25.

The relation of music to its physical basis on the one hand, and to life as a whole on the other is a fascinating topic. But it requires an unusual combination of qualities to deal with it effectively, of which Mr. Rootham shows little evidence in this book. The author confesses that he takes up a "somewhat reactionary position" with regard to modern music, and seeks to make his meaning clear by the use

of terms derived from physical science and from the new borderline between physics and philosophy. But such definitions as that of an "absolute breath," constituting space (p. 5) and of rhythm "in its genesis" as a "primal synthesis of space and time (or revealed, conscious existence)" and his statement that "rhythm is the inwardness of all music, tune its outwardness," do not advance matters. Nor does the suggestion that there is a content of music concealed in rhythm in musical space of one dimension, unfolded as melody in musical space of two dimensions, and developed as harmony in musical space of three dimensions, seem more helpful. Mr. Rootham thinks that the entire significance of music depends on its form, "the manifestation of limits imposed upon that psychic expressiveness which may equally well be called space or will." He illustrates his ideas on form by a reference to the diamond, which he supposes to be a salt of magnesia or potash (p. 20); and he incidentally alludes to entropy as a form of energy (p. 2). We advise Mr. Rootham to steer clear in future of physical science and philosophy. His objection to the excessive use of "narrow harmonies" and syncopated rhythms in modern music may be justified; but we suggest that he should explain his views in language that is intelligible to the ordinary man.

P. J. H.

*Modern French Music.* By Edward Burlingame Hill. With Portraits. George Allen & Unwin. 15s.

This work reviews the course of French music from the time of its revival in the 'seventies down to the present day. Mr. Hill's sympathies are wide and his views unprejudiced. He gives ample biographical detail; in this respect his book is probably the most useful on its subject yet available in English. The revival, in its many aspects, is well sketched: due weight is given to foreign influences, German and Russian; the emergence of the true Gallic spirit, in Chabrier, Debussy and Ravel, is rightly made most prominent. The writer does justice—a more difficult task, this—to Fauré and D'Indy, composers who are not thought of as iconoclasts, but whose music, in its long evolution, tells much of the story of the whole revival. Mr. Hill tolerates the much-maligned Satie, and duly shows us once again how this composer anticipated Debussy's harmonic idiom, and subdued foreign fashions of "polytonality" to the service of his keen ironic wit.

We doubt the value of the summaries of operatic stories which take up a great many pages of the book. Even granting the importance of the operas, foreigners have a very poor chance of hearing them performed. More space might well have been given to the modern French organ school. Even Franck's work for the organ—at its best the greatest since Bach—is not sufficiently emphasised, while lesser men like Widor and Vierne surely deserve more than nine lines between them. The chief weakness of the book, however, lies in its English. The writing is wordy, and too persistently abstract and categorical. There is little vivid appreciation of musical values. The reader has to dig for the personality of the composers; even in the biographical sections they rarely come to life. We would gladly sacrifice many polysyllabic abstractions for a few more vignettes like that on p. 67,

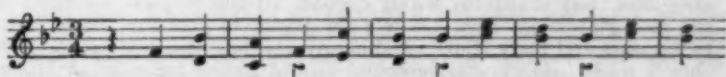
of Chabrier seated at the piano, jovially breaking strings as he storms his way through *España*.

W. W. R.

*Musical Taste and How to Form It.* By M. D. Calvocoressi. H. Milford. 2s. 6d. net.

"Taste" has certainly a better sound about it than "Appreciation," which is the name given to a study which has come into fashion in the last decade. It is all very praiseworthy, but it comes at the last to trying to put old heads on young shoulders. Either people can read words, and then we can discuss literature, and tones, and then we can discuss music—or they cannot. If they can, such books are too elementary. If they can't, there always comes, sooner or later, a moment when the discussion is above the reader's head. There are two holes one would pick in the book. The major and minor scales are stated (pp. 30, 40) to be based on æsthetic choice. If that means stress of circumstances, then by all means; but it sounds more like caprice. Is not the explanation more human? There were too many fine tunes in modes to let them die out, so we epitomised the modes in our multiform minor; but at the same time harmony became so important that we turned mode into key and called it major, and later on talked, by analogy, of a minor key. (How the modes themselves came is another and a longer story.)

That is, after all, rather a detail. The other point is more serious. Melody is described on p. 36 as a succession of single notes, and instances of these are given on p. 87. But these instances make one think. Two are Bach's, and are immediately intelligible because they are in two-part harmony; e.g., Fugue 21 of the 48—





where we are. The thought is thorough, and the expression of it wary. Much ground is covered without any feeling of hustle from one point to the next.

A. H. F. S.

*Henry Purcell.* By Dr. William H. Cummings. Sampson Low. 2s. 6d.

A reprint of Dr. Cummings' book of 1881 in the *Great Musicians* series. The author's preface is omitted; its place is filled by a "Publishers' announcement," not written by a musician, and an editorial Preface by F. Berger, whose sole merit is its brevity. The paper is poor and the printing unattractive. One hopes that Purcell did not really look like the frontispiece, which might do for George Eliot's Dr. Casaubon or haply for Thackeray's Lady Kew. The loaded paper which is wasted on this would have been better spent in redeeming Purcell's house (p. 8) from insignificance. Still, anyone who cannot find or afford a secondhand copy of the original edition and who wants Dr. Cummings' instruction rather than J. F. Runciman's entertainment will get this reprint.

A. H. F. S.

*The Reminiscences of a Fiddle Dealer.* By David Laurie. London: T. Werner Laurie. 7s. 6d.

The true connoisseur is born, not made, and David Laurie, of Glasgow, was a born connoisseur of old instruments. If he does not tell us anything about his special powers of perception, his "eye" for the qualities and beauty of a "Strad.," it is only that such abilities amount to instinct, and instinct can be discussed, not explained. On the other hand, the experiences of a connoisseur of violins are sufficiently unusual to give this volume a character of its own. It consists mainly of anecdotes, but anecdotes which concern all the greatest violinists of the last generation, from Charles De Beriot to Joachim, from Ernst to Sarasate and Lady Hallé. And in any case one aspect of connoisseurship is made evident—the profound love of Laurie for classical instruments: . . . "I courted this dealer for three years after I had seen the violin. . . . Breakfasts and dinners and evening chats went on all the time. I really believe I was the weakest of men when a fine instrument was in question . . . " Such love deserves its reward, and Laurie got it, for some of the most famous Stradivarius passed through his hands to his intense satisfaction and profit.

F. B.

*The Opera.* By R. A. Streatfeild; with an introduction by J. A. Fuller-Maitland. Fifth edition. Revised and brought down to date by Edward J. Dent. London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd. 8s. 6d. net.

Mr. Edward J. Dent, who has revised, enlarged and brought down to date the fifth edition of Streatfeild's admirable volume on the opera, is modesty itself. He assures us that he has borne in mind that this book is Mr. Streatfeild's and not his; yet he has to admit that his

share consisted in rewriting most of the first chapter and part of the third; in recasting the later chapters on modern opera; extending the final three into five; taking out a number of unimportant operas and retouching here and there Mr. Streatfeild's critical observations. It is perhaps needless to say that nothing less than surgery and reconstruction could have rejuvenated Streatfeild's "Opera," or that Mr. Dent has fulfilled his task with great authority and scholarship. Indeed, our only regret is that the volume went to press before the production of Busoni's "Faust" and Mr. Holst's "At the Boar's Head."

F. B.

*The History of Orchestration.* By Adam Carse. Kegan Paul. 12s. 6d.

The author has obviously devoted much care and thought to the preparation of this well-informed and readable volume. In dealing with the music of the 17th and 18th centuries Mr. Carse has much to say which the student will find illuminating and interesting. The chapters which review the work of the moderns seem to us less satisfactory, not because of any error of judgment, but because, to our thinking, orchestration cannot be conveniently separated from the general conception of composition which includes harmony and counterpoint. Wagner would have never revolutionised orchestration if he had not first stamped with his individuality harmony and counterpoint; the magic fanfare in Debussy's *Nuages et Fêtes* would have never been written if Debussy had not first evolved a new technique of harmony. It will be said perhaps that the author is only concerned with orchestration and could not follow step by step the evolution of harmony without assuming another and a heavy task. So much must be freely admitted. But unless we recognise the dependence of orchestral colour on harmonic design we cannot explain in a satisfactory manner the failure, as orchestral composers, of Schumann or Chopin. Mr. Carse rightly says that Schumann's "musical matter was largely based on keyboard technique." He might have gone further and demonstrated how the attempt to reproduce keyboard technique in the orchestra has led to disaster. There is only one serious lacuna; Rimsky-Korsakov's contributions to modern orchestration are too important to be mentioned only in a few brief references.

F. B.

*W. A. Mozart. Sa vie et ses œuvres.* Par J.-G. Prod'Homme. 15 francs. Librairie Delagrave, Paris.

This arrangement of Schurig's *Life of Mozart* contains a fair amount of original matter and, historically, may be said to include all the salient facts necessary to the student. Critically, it is less exhaustive. To say of an andante that it is cast in a mood of melancholy "purement Mozartienne" is to apply to it a definition which fits equally hundred other movements. And surely the G minor symphony deserves something more than eight lines in a work which devotes as many pages to the exposition of the libretto of the *Magic Flute*. At the present moment the operas of Mozart are admired and understood as well as they are ever likely to be by the public at large. On the other hand, there is ample room for criticism and discussion of his chamber music,

where some jewels are still to be found which so far appear to have been overlooked by the average musician if not by the enthusiast.

F. B.

*L'Opéra (1669-1925).* Par J.-G. Prod'Homme. Paris: Librairie Delagrave. 7 francs.

This excellent little volume of M. Prod'Homme has been written to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Opéra and the centenary of the birth of its architect, Charles Garnier. It consists of a brief history of opera in Paris since the time of Louis XIV and of a valuable, if somewhat melancholy, record of performances. For the immense majority of the operas given are now completely forgotten, and the names of their authors are not always found in the modern dictionaries. But the interest of such a history is not purely that of music. If Paris stands politically, as well as artistically, for the whole of France, the Opéra may be said to have served not only the musician, but the politician, the patriot and the revolutionary. All the chief political events of the past find some echo or other at the Opéra. In 1799 there is a performance of *La Nouvelle au Camp de L'Assassinat de Ministres Français à Rastadt, ou le Cri de Vengeance*. In the following year there was an arrest in the house of conspirators who had plotted to murder Napoleon as he issued from the theatre. In 1801 the Duc de Berry was killed as he entered the house to witness a ballet by the *citoyen* F. C. Lefebvre. The victories of Napoleon were all celebrated at the Opéra—a *Viva!* in 1805 for Austerlitz; a *Chant de Victoire* in 1806; a *Chant du retour de la Grand Armée* in 1808. And so on through the years to 1870, when *Le Rhin Allemand* was sung on words of Alfred de Musset and Gounod's *A la Frontière*. The very building which we all know is said to owe its existence to the infernal machine of Orsini, which exploded near the Opéra in the Rue le Peletier. It was then decided to build a new theatre, and Garnier was entrusted with the work in spite of the fact that he had only secured the fifth prize in the first competition.

F. B.

## MUSIC REVIEWS

The abbreviations in square brackets represent the following publishers:—

Ch. Chester.	N. Novello.
Cu. Curwen.	O.U.P. Oxf. Univ. Press.
E. Enoch.	Sch. Schirmer.
G. Goodwin & Tabb.	St. Stainer & Bell.
H. Hawkes.	W. J. Williams.
M. Murdoch.	W.R. Winthrop Rogers.

### OPERA.

In Holst's setting of Shakespeare's text to traditional tunes in *At the Boar's Head*, a study of the vocal score [N., 6s.] will show that he has been remarkably successful in, first, selecting a suitable tune and second, in contriving to fit the words so that the accentuation is faultless. It is a new idea to construct an opera on these lines, and its eventual success will depend upon the interpretation—upon whether the singers can supply the deficiency due to the fact that the natural rhythm of the words does not really correspond to that of the music. Prose free in its rhythm has here to be confined to measured phrases, and although the accents are not misplaced there is a natural rise and fall in its spirit which this musical setting constantly fails to bring out. The voices must therefore vitalise it as best they can. Fortunately Holst has wisely employed a small orchestra; also, unless the pianoforte arrangement has left a great deal out, the actual texture of the music is transparently simple.

There are difficulties for the singers of another kind in Dame Ethel Smyth's latest opera *Entente Cordiale*, recently produced by the students of the Royal College of Music [Vocal Score, Cu., 7s. 6d.]. It is an "opéra comique," that is to say, the dialogue is spoken, and this is of a nature which needs expert stage humourists to make it tell. The music, on the other hand, might belong to "grand opera," with its highly organised style and its elaboration, not so much of texture as of "line" and design. This needs expert singers, and as opera acting and play acting are different arts, Dame Ethel is expecting more from her artists than is humanly reasonable. She should, one thinks, have either contented herself with music on far simpler lines, à la Sullivan, or, best of all, have written her dialogue in a way which would have made it possible to have had continuous music. The musical numbers give us some of Dame Ethel's best work; there is real mastery in the treatment of the Cavalry Field Calls in the solo "Directions"; two French folk-tunes are worked into a delightful little intermezzo for orchestra alone; the big *ensemble*, during which the nature of the "marriage contract" is disclosed, is a most skilful

bit of work, with its gay waltz setting of the words "Vive l'entente cordiale!" All through, Dame Ethel shows her sense of dramatic effect and characterisation, while her feeling for musical humour is even keener here than in *The Boatwain's Mate*.

Another "opéra comique" is "L'Ivrogne Corrigé" of Gluck, lately edited by Vincent d'Indy. [Gustave Legouix, Paris, 25 francs.] This work was written before Gluck had turned his mind towards the reform of opera, but the music reveals the peculiarities of his style on practically every page; the curious certainty and strength of effect with the simplest means and the somewhat angular grace of melody. The edition gives the full dialogue compiled from the original Vienna production and from the score of an earlier setting by La Ruette in Paris.

N. G.

#### ORCHESTRAL SCORES.

The number of instruments employed in the modern orchestra and the great number of notes assigned to each instrument have added considerably to the difficulties of those who print or read scores. Where there is no limit to size, the printer is equal to any task and the scores of Mr. Arthur Bliss's *Mélée Fantastique* or *Colour Symphony* [Cu.] bear abundant evidence of his skill. Mr. Bliss is, of course, an out-and-out exponent of modernity. There is hardly a device of recent invention which he does not employ. But on the whole he is also one of the few moderns whose sincerity stands above question. The restlessness of his rhythm reflects a quick, alert, sanguine temperament; the constant search for new combinations of wood and brass is part and parcel of an instinct which seeks to find expression through the lavish use of the oddest combinations possible into the orchestral palette.

Some of these characteristics are found in Mr. E. J. Moeran's "First Rhapsody" [H.]. But while Mr. Bliss leaves us in no doubt as to his delight in bold adventure, Mr. Moeran suggests now and again some misgiving in breaking away from a great tradition. They go the same way, but Mr. Moeran casts many a longing glance backwards. His work is not less interesting because of the attempt to make the best of the past as well as of the present. This may appear at present a source of weakness, but it may well be that when the composer's style has ripened we shall find it an element of strength. The greatest of the innovators have frankly acknowledged their debt to the past. Of the three new compositions for string orchestra we have received, Mr. Peter Warlock's "Serenade" [O.U.P.] has the merit of freshness, originality of invention and well-balanced orchestration; Sir Hamilton Harty's arrangement of the "Londonderry Air" [Cu.] deserves a place by the side of the most effective arrangements of Gounod's "Ave Maria"; Dr. A. Mistowski's writing of a concerto by Vivaldi follows the safety-first principle, the chief contrast of colour being provided by a quartet of soli which at times acts as substitute for the "tutor."

Printer's difficulties increase as the size of the score is reduced. A pocket edition of a Beethoven or even a Tschaiowsky symphony offers no serious obstacle, and M. A. Liadow's "Eight Popular Russian Songs for Orchestra" (Belaieff, Leipzig) are equally simple and read-



able because the texture of his music and his orchestration are perfectly simple and straightforward. The scoring of the same composer's "*Le Lac Enchanté*" (same publisher), if not quite so orthodox, keeps, nevertheless, within what may be called the classical dimensions. When, however, we come to Stravinsky's "*Suite de L'oiseau de feu*" [Ch.] the crowded accidentals, the necessity of frequent indications, the sheer number of the notes that make up the bar, add to the printer's—and to the reader's—troubles. We feel we have here reached the extreme limit of possibilities. That limit has been passed in Mr. Josef Holbrooke's "*The Wild Fowl*" [G.].

#### CHAMBER MUSIC.

If the objections which have been raised against the music of Delius have not been all groundless, there is no denying the lofty beauty and the individuality of his chamber music. The "*Sonata for pianoforte and violin*" [H.] does not rise perhaps to the level of the violoncello concerto, but it stands, nevertheless, far above contemporary works of the kind. It has fitness between the medium and the idea, it has perfect proportion. And these are precisely the qualities we miss in Mr. Arnold Bax's "*Sonata for violoncello and piano*" [M.]. It appeals to us in virtue of its stride and the eloquence of certain themes, but it contains passages in which the first rapture has obviously cooled down somewhat and the composer carries on conscious of his ability to express himself plausibly rather than forcibly and convincingly. The idea which sets him going is inspired; but the thoughts that arise on the way sometimes spring from no Olympian source. This is also true to some extent of Herbert Howells' "*Sonata No. 3 for violin and piano*" [O.U.P.], which may be given as an instance of both unusual and immature talent.

On the whole, however, these English composers' style is that of the builder—not of the housebreaker. They can express themselves with the absolute freedom of the modern without having recourse to extreme means. Perhaps because of some racial instinct they avoid anything that could be interpreted or misinterpreted as revolutionary pose. On the other hand, Mr. Ernest Bloch in his "*Quintet for piano and strings*" [Sch.] exploits every possible and impossible resource, including quarter tones, and Mr. Edgar Varèse is so anxious to avoid any connection with traditional ways that he has coined the word "*Octandre*" to take the place of the usual "*Octet*" ("*Octandre* for eight instruments") [Cu.]. His innovations, however, do not stop at the title. In the first ten bars he changes the time signature eight times, and later on provides us with a brand new timed signature for occasional bars—two-four and a half; three-four and a half; one-four and a half. These innovations are not as radical as they seem, since one-four and a half=three-eight and so on. They add to the perplexities of the reader and do not alter in any way the value of the composition—which is infinitesimal. Mr. Bloch's work is much more serious and competent, but in comparison with these foreign experiments Mr. Joseph Holbrooke's "*Quintet for clarinet and strings*" [no publisher given] and Mr. C. Armstrong Gibbs' "*String quartet No. 8 in E*" [G.] are works of almost classical austerity.

## SHORT PIECES.

The great number of short, not too difficult, pieces for violin and piano published every month points to a considerable demand for music of this order. Yet the quality falls often short of the standard required if these pieces are to serve a higher purpose than that of mere sight-reading. Nothing is easier than to write a short, straightforward violin piece. Yet few things are more difficult than the combination of simplicity and distinction. Five pieces by Nicholas Gatty ("Ballatella," "Intermezzo," "Bagatelle," "Sarabande," "Canzonetta" [The Strad Ed.] fulfil these conditions in an unusual degree and stand consequently far above the average work of their kind. In these, as also in "Scherzo for 'cello and piano" [Strad Ed.] and "Bagatelle" (violin and piano) [St.] he has solved the problem of uniting a true musical interest and moderate difficulty of execution with extraordinary felicity. And because of their musical value these pieces possess also a technical worth teachers cannot afford to overlook. Mr. Jaques Van Lier's "Arrangement of classical manuscripts for violoncello and piano" [Strad Ed.], like Mr. Albert Sammons' "Canzonetta" [H.] and the "Album of six old Irish airs" arranged for violoncello by Mr. Cedric Sharpe, and for the violin by Mr. Albert Sammons [H.] have a professional air which inspires confidence. Like these, Dom Thomas Symons' "Madrigale" for violin [W.R.] can be commended to those who feel the special attraction of either the short classical air, the Irish melody or the short, original piece.

F. B.

## PIANOFORTE.

We have not received enough pianoforte music to make any representative selection. What has arrived is mostly of poor quality, and we have not been able to find even one piece that shows real inspiration.

The modern boy and girl are better off for instruction-books than their fathers. Stewart Macpherson analyses clearly two sonatas of Haydn [W.]. C. W. Cadman writes a number of short pieces called "Saturday in town" [E.], easy and by no means unattractive. The Diller-Quaille "Solo Books" [H.] simplify down to any capacity well-known folk-songs and short pieces of all nations, and display the phrasing intelligibly; a number of reading books of this kind and of all grades, for two and four hands, is much to be welcomed.

F. S.

## SONGS.

It would be impossible to give a list of all the songs that manage to get written in the short period we take for review. The reasons for passing some of them by in silence are (1) faulty accentuation of words; (2) lack of point; (3) borrowed plumage; and (4) incapacity to handle the material, with a resulting crabbedness. Below these again are others whose general cheapness of words or music, or of both, puts them out of court.

Blake's "The little black boy," by Dom Th. Symons [W.R.] is a piece of good plainsong with a delicate cross rhythm, most suitable

to its subject, and it grows on one. Might it not with advantage be taken rather faster than marked? Gerard Williams's "Juvenilia" [Cu.], five nursery rhymes, make their point with precision and effect; they are a conspicuous, though a simple instance, of good handling. Rebecca Clarke's "Three Old English Songs" [W.R.] show just how a fiddle part should be written so as to make it tell. Gerald Cooper continues his edition of old English music [Ch.] with four duets of Robert Jones and two songs of Caccini. "Rondel," by Clive Carey [E.] is as light as its words and most singable; everyone will agree that the harmonies ought to lose their heads a little just before the refrain. His "Liverpool girls" [Cu.] will be useful for any company. "In Derry Vale" is cleanly harmonised by W. McNaught [N.]; the words by W. G. Rothery seem to need feminine rhymes. G. Slater has set "Where lies the land" [O.U.P.] from Clough's Songs of Absence ingeniously with harmony that does not decide on a key and rhythm that cannot make up its mind about the *ictus*, though perhaps one of these would have been enough. The complaint about Shakespeare settings has generally been that composers are unable to write in the old style and afraid to write in the new; M. Castelnovo-Telesco [Ch.] is not afraid, but it is doubtful whether a harmony which proceeds by constant landlips really represents Shakespeare; moreover, the word-accent is misplaced, and an altered version of Boito is not satisfactory for the Willow-song. Of H. Bedford's four [Ch.], "To a Waterlily" has perhaps the most in it, but songs of this kind do not require much expenditure of trouble.

By far the most remarkable are six by Van Dieren [O.U.P.]. They are not easy. One by Skelton is immediately attractive, and "Worschippe ye that loveris bene," by James I. of Scotland, is but little harder. "Take, O take these lips away" seems to stretch harmonic implication as far as it will go, at any rate, at present, and that poignant song from "The Cenci" even further. (Two to Victor Hugo's words may be left to the French and to those Britons who pretend that they get more pleasure from a foreign language than from their own.) There is no key signature, which simplifies the reading, and no time signature, the general effect of which is to place us back among the Elizabethans. The economy of resource is admirable. One does not, of course, take in at sight such intricacy as there is here, but one feels that one is in safe hands and that such songs are worth taking trouble with. M. D. Calvocoressi's translations are good and simple: but one wonders, by the by, if *Holla!* is the true equivalent of *Heigh ho!* The publisher is hardly to be congratulated upon his proof-reading.

F. S.

#### Choral.

E. J. Moeran has found a lovely tune which one would never have guessed to be Norwegian, and has treated it as what used to be called a *Conductus*, that is, the air below and humming voices above. He has set it to words of Burns, "O sweet fa's the eve" [O.U.P.], but they do not quite fit, with the result that *apoggiaturas* and *cadents* become misplaced. Bax's "St. Patrick's Breastplate" [M.] is a Roman Catholic *Benedicite* with a different refrain. The verbal accent of plainsong is successfully imitated, response and antiphon

are provided, incense is in the air, and everything is ready for an uplifting melody which shall weld it all together; but somehow the melody does not come. Habington's "When I survey" [O.U.P.], which W. G. Whittaker has set for chorus and orchestra, is too full of thought and too lacking in incident to make much impression on an audience, but the singers will be inspired by the fine words which have led to fine harmonies. The series of Choral Songs [O.U.P.] edited by him keeps up its standard. It contains useful reprints of Handel (of whom there is a great deal waiting to be done) and Wesley and Martin Peerson. J. Milford's "Fiddler of Dooney" has go, but one wonders if there is not a bar too many after the last two verses. G. Slater's "Ballad to Queen Elizabeth" has too much of the "Sea" symphony in it, and F. Shera's *Nunc Dimittis* is like too many other songs of Simeon. Series 14-17 of St. Cecilia [W.], for treble voices and by Elizabethans, will be most useful.

F. S.

### GRAMOPHONE RECORDS OF THE QUARTER

This list is representative, not complete. H.M.V.—The Gramophone Company;  
Col.—Columbia; Voc.—Vocalion.

**Bach.** Chaconne, for Viola; by L. Tertis. [Col. 2 records.]

**Beethoven.** Symph. No. 5; by F. Weingartner and L.S.O. [Col. 4 records.]

Concerto No. 4, by York Bowen. [Voc. 4 records.]

Quartet, G ma., Op. 18, by Catterall quartet. [H.M.V. 2 records.]

Quartet, E flat, Op. 74, by Lener quartet. [Col. 4 records.]

**Berlioz.** A Roman Carnival, by Sir Hamilton Harty and Hallé orch. [Col.]

**Chopin.** Impromptu in F sharp and Nocturne in B major, by Pachmann. [H.M.V.]

**Debussy.** L'enfant Prodigue, selection, by E. Goossens and N Q H L O. [Col. 2 records.]

**Dvorak.** Slav Dance in G mi., Vn. Solo by Bratza. [Col.]

**Franck.** Quartet in D. [H.M.V. 6 records.]

**Humperdinck.** Hansel u. Gretel, overture, by F. Bridge and N Q H L O. [Col.]

**Mozart.** Figaro, overture. Minuet from Divertimento. [H.M.V.]

**Suk.** Un Poco Triste, Vn. solo, by Bratza. [Col.]

**Verdi.** La Traviata, preludes to Act 1 and Act 3, by Court Symph. Orch. [Col.]

**Wagner.** Isolde, Liebestod, by Bruno Walther and Roy. Phil. Orch. [Col.]

## REGISTER OF BOOKS ON MUSIC

THE following list contains a selection of the books on music that have been published since the compilation of the list printed in the last number of *MUSIC AND LETTERS*. The place of publication has not been added to the publisher's name if the former is the capital of the country or the latter is very well known. All prices quoted are net. In the case of foreign books the price mentioned is that at which the cheapest edition can be purchased in the country in which the book is published. At the present rates of exchange £1 is roughly equivalent to 100 French francs (fr.); to 25 Swiss francs (fr.); to 20 German marks (M.); and to 130 Italian lire (L.).

**Acoustics.** Schumann, K. E.: *Akustik*. pp. 136. P. Hirt: Breslau. 3 M.  
Wood, A.: *The Physical Basis of Music*. [2nd impression.] pp. 163. Cambridge University Press. 3/-.

**Aesthetics.** Bekker, P.: *Von den Naturreichen des Klanges*. Grundriss einer Phänomenologie der Musik. Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt: Stuttgart. 2 M.

**Appreciation.** Calvocoressi, M. D.: *Musical Taste and how to form it*. pp. 88. Milford. 2/6.

Scholes, P. A.: *The Appreciation of Music by means of the 'Pianola' and 'Duo-Art'*. ... With a chapter on How to get the best from the Pianola, by Reginald Reynolds. pp. vii. 155. Milford. 5/-.

Scholes, P. A.: *The Listener's Guide to Music*. [7th ed., revised.] pp. vii. 110. Milford. 3/6.

Weakley, Janet: *Music and its Makers*. pp. 158. Harrap. 2/6. [A very elementary introduction, intended for use in Schools.]

**Australian Music.** Bertie, C. H.: *Australia's First Composer*. [Isaac Nathan, 1790-1864.] A lecture. pp. 24. Angus & Robertson: Sydney.

**Bach.** Hasse, K.: *Johann Sebastian Bach*. pp. 179. Velhagen & Klasing: Bielefeld. 5 M. [A popular biography, with numerous illustrations.]

Sitte, H.: *Johann Sebastian Bach als "Legende"*. erzählt. pp. 134. illus. E. Reiss: Berlin. 4 M. 50.

**Beethoven.** *Beethovens Handschrift*. [10 facsimiles.] Beethoven-Haus: Bonn.

Ludwig van Beethoven. *Thematisches Verzeichnis von G. Nottebohm, nebst der Bibliotheca Beethoveniana von E. Kastner, ergänzt von T. Frimmel*. pp. x. 290. vi. 84. Breitkopf. 1925. 10 M. [Nottebohm's thematic catalogue is reprinted without alteration from the 2nd ed. of 1868, but Kastner's bibliography, first published in 1913, has been brought up to date. The latter is sold separately at 4 M.]

Ley, S.: *Beethovens Leben in authentischen Bildern und Texten*. pp. xv. 150. B. Cassirer: Berlin. 8 M.

Marliave, J. de: *Les Quatuors de Beethoven*. Avec une introduction et notes par Jean Escarra. pp. x. 408. Alcan. 30 fr.

Nottebohm, G.: *Beethoveniana*. 2 vol. Peters. 27 M. [A reprint of the "Aufsätze und Mitteilungen" first published in 1878, and of the "Nachgelassene Aufsätze" first published in 1887.]

**Bibliography.** *Katalog der Musikabteilung der öffentlichen Bibliothek der Universität Basel und der in ihr enthaltenden Schweizerischen Musikbibliothek*. Bd. 1. Musikalische Kompositionen. pp. xi. 141. University Library: Bale. 5 fr.

Hitzig, W.: *Katalog des Archivs von Breitkopf und Härtel, Leipzig*. I. Musik-Autographen. pp. vi. 50. Breitkopf. 4 M. [The great Leipzig firm possesses an enormous amount of MS. material in its archives, including autograph compositions by Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Wagner, Liszt, and Brahms. It has been somewhat secretive about its treasures in the past, and the issue of this catalogue is one of the first fruits of a welcome change of policy.]

Reifardt, E.: *Verzeichnis der Aufsätze über Musik in den nichtmusikalischen Zeitschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Basel*, abgeschlossen auf den 1. Januar. 1924. pp. xviii. 105. Breitkopf. 4 M.

**Chamber Music.** Norton, M. D. H.: *String Quartet Playing*. A new treatise on chamber music, its technique and interpretation. pp. 144. Carl Fischer: New York. [Nothing quite like this little manual has been published hitherto, the nearest thing to it being, perhaps, Mr. Fuller-Maitland's "Consort of Music," which, however, deals with other combinations as well as with the string quartet, and does not enter



quite so fully into technical details of performance. The numerous musical quotations are drawn chiefly from the quartets of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.]

**Cherubini.** Schemann, L.: *Cherubini*. pp. lviii. 765. illus. Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt: Stuttgart. 16 M. [An exhaustive biography, said to be the fruit of nearly fifty years' study, which throws much new light on the life and work of a composer who has been undeservedly neglected of late.]

**Cornelius.** Cherbuliez, A. E.: *Peter Cornelius*. pp. 44. Hug & Co.: Zurich. 3 fr. 50. [The 113th Neujahrsblatt of the Allgemeine Musikgesellschaft at Zurich.]

**Criticism.** Lütke, K.: *Der Weg zur neuen Musik*. Ein Fragment. pp. 64. W. Piepenschneider: Brunswick. 2 M. 50.

**Dictionaries.** Dunstan, R.: *A Cyclo-pædic Dictionary of Music*. 4th ed. [greatly enlarged]. pp. ix. 632. Curwen. 25/-.

**Ear Training.** Chamberlain, Mabel: *Ear Training, including Musical Appreciation and Rhythmic Movements*. Pt. 1. For children from five to nine years of age. Novello. 8/- (separately: Letterpress, 4/-; Music, 3/-).

**Educational.** Newman, E.: *How to Teach Music to Children*. pp. xii. 141. C. Fischer: New York.

**Form.** Lach, R.: *Die Konstruktionsprinzip der Wiederholung in Musik, Sprache, und Literatur*. pp. 40. Hölder-Pichler - Tempaky: Vienna. 1925. 1 M. 50. [One of the "Sitzungsberichte" of the Viennese Academy of Sciences.]

**Pieper, C.: Musikalische Analyse.** Eine musikalische Formenlehre in der Form von Musteranalysen klassischer Tonstücke. pp. 409. P. J. Tonger: Cologne. 4 M.

**Richter, A.: Die Lehre von der Form in der Musik.** [2nd ed.] pp. vi. 161. Breitkopf. 4 M.

**Grimm.** Ludwig, F.: *Julius Otto Grimm*. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der musikalischen Spätromantik. pp. iii. 138. ports. Velhagen & Klasing: Bielefeld. 4 M. 50. [Grimm, who lived from 1827-1903, was an intimate friend of Brahms. His two "Suites in Canon Form" (for String orchestra) are still frequently performed in Germany.]

**Handel.** Schrader, B.: *Händel*. pp. 92. Reclam. 40 pf. [Reclam's Universal - Bibliothek No. 8497. A reprint, without alteration, of the edition first published in 1896.]

**Harmony.** Weigl, B.: *Harmonielehre*. 2 vol. Schott. 18 M. [An advanced text-book, by a well-known German composer, which endeavours to take

account of recent experiments in poly-tonal and atonal writing. Vol. 1 (pp. xv. 407) contains the main text, vol. 2 a collection of illustrative examples.]

**History.** Anon.: *Milestones of Music*. Answers to the question:—What composers... originated novel methods... which constituted an important departure in the development of the art of music? With French translation. pp. 28. Published for private circulation only (printed at the Chiswick Press). [The author claims that "this little book does not contain the opinion of one person, but is a summary of answers given by many persons." We fancy that the summarizing does not always do them justice. We read, for instance, that Debussy "seems to have seized upon fluids and transmitted them to his hearers without the latter being able to analyse the reasons of their sensations."]

**Bie, O.: Die neuere Musik bis Richard Strauss.** [3rd. ed.] pp. 122. illus. Kistner. 2 M. 75.

**Hadow, Sir W. H.: Music.** pp. 256. Williams & Norgate. 2/6. [A revised reprint of the volume in the Home University Library first issued in December last.]

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**Liszt.** Chop, M.: *Frans Lissts symphonische Werke*. Bd. 2. pp. 85. Reclam. 40 pf. [Reclams Universal-Bibliothek, No. 6548. Musical analyses, with historical notes, of the 12 symphonic poems. Bd. 1 was recorded in the April book-list.]

**Mozart.** Mersman, H.: *Mozart*. pp. 62. illus. J. Bard: Berlin. 3 M. 50. [One of a series entitled "Kulturgeschichte der Musik in Einzeldarstellungen."]

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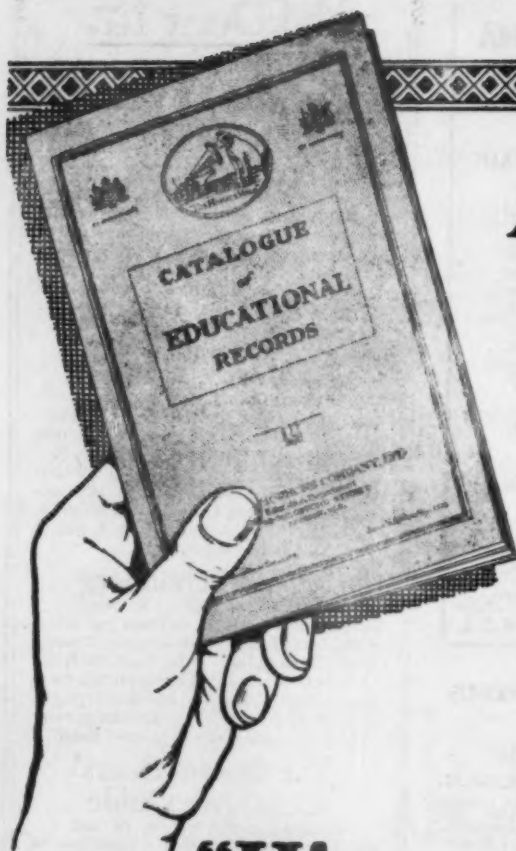
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